

Concordia Theological Monthly

Vol. XIII

NOVEMBER, 1942

No. 11

"Practical" Subjects for Pastoral Conferences

It is an interesting phenomenon, and one entirely in keeping with the lessons of church history, including the history of dogma, that a period of intense interest in doctrinal matters and in doctrinal discussions in any church-body may be followed by a period which is characterized by evidences of fatigue and of being surfeited with studies and discussions of this nature. In other words, we may expect periods of externalization to follow generations of the required emphasis on Scriptural doctrine in its fulness and comprehensiveness.

It is not necessary, of course, that such alternate seasons *should* be found in the Church, that the living orthodoxy of the Lutheran Reformation, for example, should be followed by a period of *Hochorthodoxie* introduced and sustained by what almost amounted to an evangelical scholasticism. But this movement finally resulted, as history shows, in excrescences which culminated in Pietism and even in Rationalism. If the history of dogma teaches us anything at all, we should learn to realize that a cold intellectualism in the field of Christian doctrine is bound to have such consequences, either an externalization in the outward forms of worship or a hostility toward the emphasis upon purity of doctrine. In more than one instance this tendency has led to indifference with regard to orthodoxy and subsequently to unionism. The literature of the Church offers abundant testimony, in such instances, of developments which operate with specious arguments intended to set aside the unequivocal insistence upon a full acceptance of Scriptural truth.

Many of these considerations were occasioned by observations made during the last decade, not so much with reference to any negotiations with other Lutheran bodies in America as with regard to phenomena in our own midst. There are symptoms before us, and some of these of an alarming nature, that discussions per-

taining to the primary or fundamental doctrines of the Bible are considered superfluous, if not boresome. Many of the topics assigned for pastoral conferences are far from the field of fundamental dogmatics and Biblical theology. Have we really exhausted the possibilities of study with regard to the doctrine of justification, especially the Scriptural fact of the objective justification with its implications for mission-work and church-membership classes, of the atonement through the blood of Christ, of the reconciliation planned in the counsel of the Triune God and effected through the sacrifice of Calvary? Are all the teachers of our Church clear on all points of the doctrine of conversion, of predestination, or the election of grace, even on plenary and verbal inspiration? And even if a conference, in the course of a few decades, has apparently exhausted the topics offered by the field of dogmatics so far as the older members are concerned, what about the young men, who certainly are in great need of being firmly rooted and grounded in the Word of Truth? If we feel that a change is needed, in order to give us a new approach, what about studying the entire Bible, or at least its most important books, from the standpoint of Biblical theology? It is inductive study, to be sure, and frequently requires harder work than the simpler deductive system of dogmatics. But what marvelous opportunities it offers to individuals and to groups, working along more functional lines, to ransack the Scriptures most thoroughly and to gain the confidence of direct contact with the inspired account!

If the objection is still voiced that present-day conditions demand practical discussions, our reply is this: Where could we expect discussions which have a more direct bearing upon any conceivable circumstance of life and conduct than in the Word of the eternal and omniscient God? Of course, we here proceed from the assumption, nay, upon the claim that the Scripture is not a mere historical document which brings lessons to us only by deduction and implication but that "whatsoever is written aforetime is written for our *learning*," Rom. 15:4, and that "*all* Scripture is . . . profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," 2 Tim. 3:16. The attitude taken by some teachers at the present time that instructions and admonitions found in apostolic writings are not applicable to our times by the text itself finds no support in the Bible and its demands. Unless the context of any particular passage definitely limits the statements it contains to contemporaneous conditions, we are to regard the words of the Lord as having a direct bearing upon the belief and conduct of all men everywhere.

In support of our contention that the Bible is an intensely practical book and should be made the basis of all conference

discussions at all times, we should like to present, at this time, only two suggestions, supporting each of them with an outline containing evidence for our position. We are surely all in full agreement on the point that the Bible is a *book of teaching*, that its purpose is to make men wise. We have in the Scriptures the words of the prophets of old, in the historical, prophetic, and poetical books of the Old Testament; and we have the words of the evangelists (including the direct teaching of our Savior) and the apostles in the books of the New Testament. Do we often pay attention to the fact that the *form of presentation*, and not only the content, the approach and the method, offer a very important field of study to the teacher of the Bible to this day? For example, Jesus had the words of eternal life, as Peter so joyfully confesses, John 6:68. Yet He did not fling these words at men in various teaching situations in an indiscriminate manner, but He proved Himself a master teacher by taking into account the individual and the group, the background and the state of intelligence, in fact, every item or factor which was necessary to bring about conditions of perfect teaching. And this fact must be kept in mind with regard to all the other teachers who speak to us through the pages of the Bible. True, we cannot place them on a level with the Master Teacher, Jesus, in whom "all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily," and "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. 2:9, 3, but we know that the Holy Ghost, who gave these men the *impulsus scribendi* and also the *materia docendi*, thereby utilized and undoubtedly also intensified the natural ability of the inspired writers as διδάσκαλοι. In other words, these men, under the Spirit's guidance, made use of their natural capacities as well as their acquired abilities, also in the field of teaching, in order to present the divine truth in the best possible form in the specific teaching situations with which they were confronted when they penned the words of their accounts, letters, or dissertations. That is why these writings are such excellent models for our study, not only for their content but also for their form. That is why an individual, or a group, could well spend decades of intensive study in order to understand the teaching methods of the inspired writers and, if possible, to follow in their footsteps.

Let us take, for example, the Apostle Paul. Even a superficial knowledge of Biblical Introduction will enable the student of Scriptures to see how amazingly well the form of his teaching fitted the situation of each addressee whom he had in mind as he wrote. His manner of presentation differs in each of his letters, even in those which were written to the same congregations and within a relatively short interval, as e. g., in the case of

the letters to the Corinthians or those to the Thessalonians. There are similarities, to be sure, in the so-called Captivity Letters and in the Pastoral Letters. But the differences observable in these letters are just as clearly set forth, if one but takes the trouble to look for them.

The Letter to the Romans is rightly called the *didactica magna* of the Apostle Paul, and evidently not only on account of its contents but also on account of its form. It is compelling, overwhelming in its argumentation; it leads the reader from one point to another, so that he cannot escape the conclusions which inevitably grow out of the discussion. Let us analyze the first chapters of this remarkable document.

The apostle at once establishes a point of contact with his readers, the members of the congregation at Rome, which at this time he had not yet visited. His salutation awakens interest, because it at once places the God-man, Christ Jesus, in the center of the discussion, and his greeting is sincere, eager, and enthusiastic: "beloved of God, called to be saints." It is a positive, constructive approach, and highly practical, because it shows the apostle's intense and prayerful longing for the Roman Christians and refers to his earnest attempts to make the journey to Rome at the earliest opportunity. At the conclusion of this wonderful introduction (vv. 16, 17) the apostle states the theme of the entire letter in the words of a mighty declaration, while at the same time he suggests the question which his readers were expected to have in mind as the aim of the teaching of the letter, namely: How is this righteousness of God to be obtained?

In developing his theme or topic, the apostle, having in mind to present the righteousness of God, as wrought by Christ and imputed to faith, must needs proceed from the fact of the need of this righteousness on the part of man. In vv. 18-32, therefore, he draws a startlingly vivid picture and a scathing denunciation of the Gentile world, with its unspeakable guilt before the holy God. Every word of this description is so placed and so supported as to exclude the slightest opportunity of any Gentile to offer extenuating circumstances or to plead innocence.

But at this point the apostle hears an implied objection, namely on the part of one or more members of the Roman congregation of Jewish extraction: Surely this accusation and denunciation does not include me; I am not guilty of such idolatry or of such unspeakably wicked conduct. But the apostle immediately brings a counter-argument, which completely overthrows the protests of self-righteousness. He flatly states that the Jew and the Gentile are in the same position before God. He asks a leading and very personal question to provoke thought and to

arouse the conscience, followed by a direct charge that self-righteousness tends to harden the heart and to inure the conscience. (Vv. 3-5.)

Having thus stated his thesis with regard to the condemnation of both Gentiles and Jews before the forum of God's holiness, the apostle analyzes this theme by showing that the judgment of God is against all unrighteousness, no matter where it is found, climaxing a series of parallel clauses with an emphatic declaration that there is no respect of persons with God, whether a person without the knowledge of the written Law or with such a knowledge is concerned in the situation. This development of the apostle's major premise, up to and including verse 16, is followed by a minor premise in vv. 17-29, concerning the failure of the Jew to fulfil the Law. The writer begins with an assumption or hypothetical case, with a description of a Jew who might feel that his conduct is in full agreement with the Law of God, vv. 17-20. But the conclusions in his own favor which the Jew evidently wishes to have drawn are skilfully set aside and proved to be inadequate by a series of leading questions which definitely cause the self-righteous Jew to reconsider his opinion of himself, vv. 21-23. The inevitable deduction from the obvious answer to these questions is clinched by an appeal to Scripture authority, to an argument from the Ceremonial Law, and by two rhetorical questions, vv. 24-27. The conclusion of this minor premise takes the form of an explanation which intends to have the Jewish reader form a correct definition of one who is a Jew indeed, namely, according to the estimate of God, vv. 28, 29.

But at this point the apostle senses the possibility of an objection, which he must answer in order to satisfy his readers as to the correctness of his contention that the Jews are also under the condemnation of unrighteousness. Some one may say: What advantage, then, has the Jew? Is the position which he held under the Old Testament covenant of no benefit to him? Is all his supposed righteousness in the outward keeping of the Law an empty boast? Chap. 3:1. The apostle begins to reply by pointing to at least one outward advantage, a privilege which is historical and therefore objectively acceptable, namely, that to the Jews God had committed His oracles. Immediately another objection in the form of a suggestive question is interjected: Surely the fact that there were some renegades among the people of the Old Covenant could not make the faithfulness of God invalid, so that His adoption of the Jews, presumably on the basis of their righteousness, would no longer stand? The negative answer is given by the apostle with great vehemence, and supported, furthermore, by a Scripture text, v. 4.

Still another objection is implied in vv. 5 and 6, again in the form of a suggestive question calling for a negative answer on the part of the apostle: If the righteousness of God, by way of contrast to the unrighteousness of men, stands out all the more gloriously on the strength of the latter, should we assume that God is expending his anger on man when He charges them with unrighteousness? Would that not militate against just judgment of God? The apostle disposes also of this objection. And still another point might be raised here, as the apostle indicates, vv. 7 and 8, namely, that the very fact of human deficiency might redound to the glory of God, for which reason God should not be so severe with those by whose sinful actions some good was caused.

This leads to the climax of this part of the apostle's argument, which he introduces as a question on the part of some Jewish reader or hearer, somewhat sarcastically offered: I take it, then, that we Jews are not considered better than the Gentiles with respect to an acceptable righteousness. And Paul's reply is forceful: No, in no wise, a statement which he proceeds to prove by a long list of passages from the Old Testament, every one of which places Jews and Gentiles on the same level of condemnation before the forum of God's justice and tells all men, without exception, that they lack the righteousness which would make them acceptable in the sight of God. And the conclusion of this entire argument, with special reference to the Jewish objector and skeptic, is: By works of the Law no mortal may hope to be declared righteous in the sight of God.

The summary of the apostle's arguments up to this point may be given as follows: Major premise, God's judgment is against all unrighteousness (and the Gentiles must here be declared to be unrighteous); minor premise, The Jew has failed to fulfil the Law of God (hence the Jew also is unrighteous); conclusion: The Jew is equally guilty with the Gentile in the sight of God.

Thus one might continue through the entire letter, analyzing the manner of Paul's teaching from paragraph to paragraph and from verse to verse, and thereby penetrating ever more deeply into the pedagogical skill of this great teacher. A small conference might do well to put the Greek text of Romans into the hands of all its members and, with the aid of some grammatical knowledge, trace the development of every argument employed for the sake of drawing conclusions and driving home the individual points. It is a project which will undoubtedly elicit much discussion and will lead to a better evaluation and application of the apostle's amazing teaching ability, a form of training which clearly is invaluable for both children's and adult catechumen classes.

Let us now demonstrate a second form of the study of Scrip-

tures along practical lines. It is a form of topical study along synthetic lines, the theme being: The position and work of Christian women according to the Pastoral Letters. A requirement for the success of this type of conference work is the absence of fixed ideas, of preconceived notions, for we must at all times approach the Word of God with open minds, with the suggestion of Eli, as made to Samuel, furnishing the impetus: Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.

Our theme may be put thus: What does the Lord say through His inspired apostle, concerning the position of Christian women in the home and in the Church? Let us analyze or subdivide our topic by asking: 1. What about young women? 2. What about older women? 3. What about young widows? 4. What about older widows?

1. What about young women? What is their position according to the express will of God?—The apostle names some personal virtues and habits when he states that women in general are not to exhibit the characteristics of the emancipated females of the Grecian world, and in particular of the *demimonde* of that day. The coiffure affected by women of loose morals, with a plethora of gold and pearls and costly garments bedecking their bodies, was definitely not in harmony with the conduct of those women of whom the Lord expected modesty and a show of quiet common sense, healthy-mindedness of the highest order, which certainly does not seek the attention of either men or women by clothing that attracts the eye, for Christian women are to dress only in modest apparel, such as is not worn with the idea of alluring men or emphasizing charms which are not intended by the Lord for public display. 1 Tim. 2:9. Instead of this, the one and only way in which a Christian woman is truly adorned to please the Lord, as one professing godliness, is by the exercise of good works. V. 10.

Does it follow, then, that a Christian woman is to withdraw from all human society and intercourse and to be condemned to a life of ignorance? Not at all, as the apostle explains in verse 11. She may and she should learn, but, as the Lord says, in silence she shall learn, in all subjection, as one who is under the direction and headship of her husband (or her father). Her mentality and intellectual equipment are not for one moment questioned or placed on a low level, for it is a question of headship and leadership only. Cp. 1 Cor. 14:34, 35. In emphasizing the point that a Christian woman should not assume the functions of a public teacher in meetings representative of the congregations ("keeping silence in the congregations"), the apostle adds: "To teach I do not permit a woman, nor to lord it over a man, but to be in silence." V. 12. So it is definitely the Lord's will to have women

excluded from positions of teaching and leadership in the Church, for the two verbs are coordinated in the sentence. And this command the apostle supports by proof-texts from the Old Testament (Gen. 1:27; 2:7, 22; 3:6). On the one hand, the priority of Adam's creation is presented as the reason for the leadership of the man in the affairs concerned in this statement. And, on the other hand, there is the fact that Eve, the woman, was completely misled by Satan, so that she, literally, "became in the transgression," that is, she was involved in it, she was the first to yield to the blandishments of the devil. This again does not reflect upon the keenness of the woman's intellect but merely indicates that her emotional reactions may cause her to yield more quickly than the average man under the same circumstances. Cp. Eccl. 7:28. See also the apostle's reference to the proneness to emotional instability, 2 Tim. 3:6 f.

That the apostle has chiefly younger women in mind, such as may normally be supposed to live in the estate of holy matrimony, is seen from the concluding verse of the chapter, which sets forth the position and the function of a Christian woman in a most unique way, for the apostle states: "She shall, however, be saved through child-bearing," this being her special God-given privilege and a good work which would, in a particular sense, give evidence of the saving faith which lives in her heart, as the concluding words, in a generalizing statement, declare: "If they (that is, all the women who are here concerned, who fit the apostle's description) remain in faith and love and sanctification, with healthy-mindedness." These are personal qualifications and virtues which appear in the life of Christian women in the sphere which the economy of God has assigned to them.

If we turn, now, to Titus 2:4, 5, we find an enumeration of attributes and virtues which the Lord expects in younger women. The young women, according to the text, are to be "husband-loving, children-loving," evidently as the basis of family life, and in this connection sensible, chaste. Of particular importance in this connection is the word *οικουργός*, connected with a verb which means "to perform the housewifely duties, to attend to the work of the household." Well does the adjective *ἀγαθός* attach itself to the list at this point, since it means *tuechtig, brauchbar, tauglich*, excellent, applying herself to her duties, dependable. And the concluding phrases are certainly most significant: "Subject to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed." A Christian woman who fails in this respect, brings shame and disgrace upon the name and Word of God. Cp. Rom. 2:23, 24.

If we briefly summarize what the Pastoral Letters say specifically of younger women, we have the following picture. Their

sphere of activity is not to be in public, specifically in the public meetings in which the affairs of the Christian congregation are managed, not in congregational or ecclesiastical leadership. Their dress and adornment is not to be along the lines affected by the women of the world, in an ostentatious display of jewelry and alluring coiffures. Their conduct is to reflect good common sense and healthy-mindedness, discretion, chastity, goodness, submissiveness to their husbands, love, holiness, as outgrowths of true faith. Above all, the home should be the center of their activity, in having charge of its various duties, in bearing and rearing children and in showing the proper regard for the members of their household. The slogan of the former empress of Germany, Augusta Viktoria, may well find emulation also in our days: *Kirche, Kinder, Kueche*.

We have treated the first point at some length, in order to demonstrate the possibilities of such topical treatment with practical applications. We shall present the other points in outline form only.

2. What about older women? What is their position according to the will of God? How can they best give evidence of their consecration to their Lord? — They are, briefly, to exhibit those attributes which will accord to them the respect due to mothers, 1 Tim. 5:2a. They are, more specifically, as the apostle states, in their attitude to be respectable, their entire conduct being in keeping with their position as saints, yea, as priestesses of the Lord (ιεροπρεπείς). Of course, they cannot be guilty of tale-bearing and blackening their neighbors' character, nor will they be addicted to wine, being slaves of spirituous liquors in habitual drinking. A very fine sphere of activity for such older women, whom the duties of the household will probably not confine to the home exclusively, is given by the apostle in the words that they should be "good teachers, in order that they may give sensible instruction (and by such admonitions bring about a condition of a well-balanced judgment) to younger women." This suggestion of the apostle opens up a field of great opportunities, since older women have a most excellent chance to give the younger women the benefit of their experience and thus to be patterns to them in sanctified living. It is a field of activity which may well satisfy the most energetic and ambitious of Christian women, so that there will be no need for further fields to conquer.

3. What about young widows? Apparently their position in the Christian congregations in apostolic times called for special treatment, but the principles laid down in the inspired account may well serve to regulate certain vexing problems in Christian congregations at this time. The apostle's direction to Timothy with

reference to this situation is sharp: "But the younger widows reject (that is, refuse to have their names placed on the rosters of those who received special assistance from the congregation)." The reason for this is contained in the explanation of the apostle that the assistance given by the congregation in such cases might cause such younger widows to give themselves to a wanton life, contrary to the life of chastity which the profession of Christianity exacts from its adherents, so that women of this type often reached the stage when they actually denied the faith which they had formerly held and confessed. At the same time the opportunity given them by the assistance rendered by the Christian congregation might cause them to yield to idleness and to become gadabouts and busybodies, concerning themselves with affairs which were none of their business and thus making a nuisance of themselves, especially by their idle talk. The strong apostolic advice and injunction in cases of this kind, therefore, is that these younger women should get married, that they should bear and rear children, that they should be in charge of the home, and thus in every possible way avoid the danger of having the adversaries of the Christian religion speak of it in a disparaging manner. (Each one of these points may be carried out at much greater length, with constant reference to parallel passages in Scripture.)

4. What about older widows? Here the Lord's instructions are very comprehensive, 1 Tim. 5:3 ff., 9ff. The apostle definitely condemns any widow who lives in wantonness. His picture of a widow whose conduct is God-pleasing is that of one who in her more or less lonely state puts her trust in God, who is the God of the widows and the fatherless, and is engaged in prayers and in supplications night and day, thus keeping in the most intimate communion with her heavenly Father at all times. And in further characterizing a widow who lives in accordance with the high ideals of the Christian religion, the apostle emphasizes chastity and faithfulness in holy marriage, together with the fact that such a widow should have the testimony of having been active in good works, of having borne and reared children, of having practiced true Christian hospitality, of having relieved the troubles of those who were in affliction, and of having very earnestly and assiduously followed good works of every kind. Here again the individual points could be carried out at great length, in order that every Christian congregation, with its pastor, may understand the will of God with regard also to the older widows in the congregation. For such is the description which the Word of God affords with reference to the position of Christian women in the various circumstances of life.

It is in this manner that pastoral conferences may well do their work along the lines of institutes, in studying the Word of God in its many practical applications in life situations, the many professional relationships as well as the doctrinal implications. The number of topics which could be treated in this fashion is practically inexhaustible, and corporate study conducted in this fashion will certainly lead to a deeper appreciation of the Bible as the source of all doctrine and the one norm of life.

P. E. KRETZMANN

Verbal Inspiration — a Stumbling-Block to the Jews and Foolishness to the Greeks

(Continued)

We are asked to come in under the charter of liberty proclaimed by the moderns which calls for freedom from "the tyranny of words." We cannot do so, for three reasons.

First, we do not feel that Verbal Inspiration imposes a legalistic yoke on us. It does indeed require of us unquestioning acceptance of all the statements of Scripture. On that we and the moderns are agreed. We are bound by every word of Scripture. But we do not resent, nor rebel against, this bondage. It is a holy bondage. We rejoice in it. Why? Verbal Inspiration has taught us that these words of Scripture are God's words. In every word of Scripture our glorious Lord, our gracious God, is speaking.

We can understand the attitude of the moderns. They conceive of the Bible as a more or less human product. "Die heilige Schrift," R. F. Grau and the rest say, "ist uns nicht mehr ein grosser vom Himmel herabgesandter Gesetzeskodex." But we know that it actually did come down from heaven. "Holy Scripture did not grow here on earth." (Luther, VII:2095.) Therefore we give it honor and reverence and gladly obey every word of it.

The moderns are laboring under the delusion that ever so many of its statements are erroneous, that ever so many of its teachings need restatement and development. Verbal Inspiration has freed us from this delusion and superstition. We have learned that God's Book is perfect. We fear to lay unholy hands upon it. We tremble at God's Word. "As for me, every verse makes the world too small for me." (Luther, XX:788.)

No, no; we do not feel that the command to "consent to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 6:3) puts us under a degrading bondage. When God addresses His servants, they say: "Speak; for Thy servant heareth," 1 Sam. 3:10; "Thou hast the words of eternal life," John 6:68. When we read and preach holy

Scripture, we know that we are dealing with "the oracles of God," 1 Pet. 4:11, and our hearts are filled with holy awe and humble obedience.³⁰⁹

That would make us slaves, blindly obeying their master. We like that word, bondservant, slave. Paul liked it: "Παῦλος δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ," Rom. 1:1. He bestows that title of honor on the Christians: "δοῦλωθέντες τῷ θεῷ," Rom. 6:22; "δουλεύουσιν, . . . ὑπακούη," Rom. 16:18, 19. Lenski: "Acting the part of slaves who obey as slaves, obey without question every word of 'our Lord Jesus Christ,' to whom as *our* Lord all of us (you Romans and I) are slaves." Nor is the word "law" an evil word. It is high praise when it is said of a man: "The *law* of truth was in his mouth," Mal. 2:6, and the child of God declares: "I will delight myself in Thy *statutes*," Ps. 119:16. It does not jar us when Jesus bids us to "observe all things whatsoever I have *commanded* you," Matt. 28:20. The moderns declare that to observe all the commands laid down in Scripture or any of them, to follow scrupulously every or any teaching, and to stick to every word of the Bible is "legalistic." We say: No! That is yielding holy obedience to our Lord, who gave us all of Scripture by verbal inspiration. But that would make the Bible the "textbook of doctrine," a "manual," "a code of laws of faith" ("Sammlung von Glaubensgesetzen" (Hofmann, *Schriftbeweis*, I, p. 9)! That is what we want, definite teachings, inviolable teachings, set down by God Himself. We do not hesitate to say: Holy Scripture is "das *Lehrbuch* der christlichen Religion" (Pieper, *Chr. Dog.*, I, p. 79). We are not horrified when J. G. Machen declares: "The Bible is the supreme textbook on the subject of faith." (*What Is Faith*, p. 45.) "Auch unsere Vaeter sagen: 'Die Heiligen Schriften sind die unveraenderlichen Statuten der Kirche. Und nach diesen Statuten hat die Kirche ihr Handeln, ihr Tun und Lassen zu richten und alles in der Gemeinde zu beurteilen. In jedem Stueck soll sich die Gemeinde erkundigen nach dem Willen ihres Herren in der Schrift.'" (*Theol. Quartalschrift*, 1942, p. 31.) "When Tertullian speaks of the Scriptures as an 'Instrument,' a legal document, his terminology has an express warrant in the Scriptures' own usage of *tōrāh*, 'law,' to designate their entire content." (B. B. Warfield, *Revelation and*

309) James Bannerman: "The modern theologian comes to the Bible and sits over its contents in the attitude of a judge who is to decide for himself what in it is true and worthy to be believed and what is false and deserving to be rejected, not in the attitude of the disciple who, within the limits of the inspired record, feels himself at Jesus' feet to receive every word that cometh out of His mouth. The assurance that the Bible is the Word of God, and not simply containing it in more or less of its human language, is one fitted to solemnize the soul with a holy fear and a devout submission to its declarations as the very utterances of God." (See B. Manly, *The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration*, p. 16.)

Inspiration, p. 33.) We do not at all feel degraded when we declare: "Ich bin gefangen; I am bound; I cannot escape it. The text stands there too mightily." (Luther, XV:2050.) Slaves of God, captives of His Word, bound by a text of Scripture—we are proud of this situation and condition.

But *blind* obedience and *enforced* obedience and the like! The moderns are very emphatic on this point. "It is analogous to the Roman Church doctrine which requires from the individual believer the same axiomatic obedience to the teachings of the Church, a confidence in advance, an antecedent *sacrificium intellectus*, before one can come into contact with the contents of these teachings. This in both cases is what may be called blind authority and blind obedience." (E. Brunner, *The Word and the World*, p. 92.) *Blind* obedience—yes; we accept any *dictum* of Scripture unquestioningly, even when the matter is beyond our understanding. But not blind obedience if that means that the verbal inspirationists have no knowledge of the matter presented in Scripture and give it little thought.³¹⁰⁾ And *enforced* obedience? Absolutely no. The Christian gives willing obedience to the Word of God. The moderns seem to be entirely ignorant of the true state of affairs. As soon as Scripture (by what it says on Verbal Inspiration) has convinced a man that it is God's Word, the Christian no longer asks: Must I accept these statements? When he hears that God is assuring him that John 3:16 and all other Bible statements are His words, the sinner's heart leaps for joy and loves every single Scripture declaration. Have the moderns so little knowledge of the power of God's Word and particularly of the power of the Gospel? "The advocates of Verbal Inspiration do not set up Scripture as a 'paper Pope,' demanding external subjection without inner conviction, but Scripture is to them a book which—just because it is God's own Word—itself works faith and *eo ipso* willing and joyous acceptance through the operation of the Holy Spirit inherent in it." (Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 365.) "Do these men not know that there is an obedience which is *produced by the Gospel*, an obedience which finds itself bound to the whole Word of its God?" (Dr. M. Reu, *Kirchl. Zeitschrift*, 1939, p. 190.)

And here is Christian liberty! Spiritual liberty springs from

310) M'Intosh on "the misrepresentation that the upholders of the Bible claim adopt a slavish literalism, maintain a 'cast-iron theory'": "No intelligent defender of the truth of Scripture has ever advocated such a slavish literalism. There is a literalism which is not slavish but reverent, not forced but scientific: even that which leads to a scrupulous carefulness to ascertain, by correct exegesis, the precise meaning of the words of God," etc. This talk of "slavish literalism is nothing else than reckless and culpable misrepresentation, and a discreditable caricature of that position." (*Is Christ Infallible?* p. 315.)

obedience to God. The knowledge and acceptance of the truth makes us free (John 8:31 f.). Liberated from the bondage of error and sin and endowed with the Spirit of God, we are free to follow His leading and enjoy something of God's liberty. For once we agree with *The Christian Century* (Feb. 11, 1942): "We are not morally free until we have surrendered our human will to the will of God. . . . 'Make me a captive, Lord,' sang George Matheson, 'and then I shall be free.'" Slaves we are of God, and God's freedmen. Let us change Haas's statement "What the theologian calls the Word of God, namely, the spiritual content of the Bible, is an authority of freedom" into: "The Word of God, Holy Scripture, is an authority of freedom. . . . It does no injury to our moral freedom." It gives us spiritual freedom. — Spiritual freedom is not license. Dr. Haas rejects "the claims of a mechanically infallible Bible, verbally perfect" and appeals to the "authority of freedom." The Christian is *not* free to subject Scripture to his criticism. It is not true that "Christian liberty knows how to distinguish between Scripture and Scripture, between the shell and the content," etc. (Sherer.) That is wicked license, abuse of freedom, anarchy, lawlessness. (The moderns have a horror of "legalism," "legalistic treatment of Scripture." Had they not better ask themselves whether their treatment of Scripture is "legal," right, and permissible? Let them talk less about "legalistic" and be more concerned about their illegal practices, their lawless treatment of Scripture.) But he enjoys true spiritual liberty who is able to give free assent to every word of Scripture.

What about the charge that Verbal Inspiration hampers the spirit and induces spiritual sluggishness, yea, the death of all theological aspirations? ("The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life"!) The fact is that this doctrine—as every other Scripture doctrine—carries divine power. We need mention only one thing. It gives the believer the wonderful spiritual strength to suppress the strong carnal impulse to belittle God's Word and exercise mastery over it. It causes him to honor and magnify every word of Scripture.

And now for the charge of "bibliolatry" and related crimes. The moderns do not mean to say that we fall down before this Book and pray to it as though it were God. What they mean is that we receive every word of it as though it were God's own word and yield absolute obedience to it. We plead guilty to the charge. The verbal-inspirationist Luther thus dealt with Scripture. "Halte von dieser Schrift als von dem allerhoechsten, edelsten Heiligtum." For it is God's own word: "You are so to deal with it that you think that God Himself is saying this" (XIV:4; III:21). For the same reason the verbal-inspirationists Paul and Peter regarded Scripture as a holy thing, a sacrosanct volume, endued

with all the majesty and authority of the eternal God. See 1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:21. If you "identify Scripture and God's Word" as Pieper does (*op. cit.*, I, p. 256), as M. Loy does: "The Holy Scriptures are the very Word of God in matter and in form. 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.' In the Scriptures the Sovereign Lord of all has revealed His righteousness and His gracious will in *His own words*" (*Dist. Doctrines*, 1893, p. 6), as Luther and Paul and all the others do, how can you refrain from fearing, loving, and honoring these words as you fear, love, and honor God above all things? And we shall say something in addition. In a certain respect Scripture and God are identified. Scripture itself so identifies it. "Christus ehrte in allen Dingen seinen Vater. Darum kehrte er so angelegentlich die Schrift hervor. Denn er sah in der Schrift nichts anderes als das Wort und den Willen seines Vaters. . . . So tritt statt des Subjekts 'die Schrift' ohne weiteres das andere Subjekt 'Gott' in die Rede ein. 'Die Schrift sagt zu Pharaon: Eben darum habe ich [das ist Gott], dich erwecket, dass ich an dir meine Macht erzeige.'" (G. Stoeckhardt; *Lehre und Wehre*, 1886, p. 212.)³¹¹ Study also this statement of Dr. Pieper: "There is another series of Bible passages which must not be overlooked in connection with the question whether Scripture and the Word of God are identified or not. These are the passages which state that Scripture directs the course of all events in the world. All that has happened and will happen, from the beginning to the end of the world, must and will take place according to what is *written*. Thus Matt. 7:22; John 17:12; Matt. 26:54; Luke 24:44 ff.: 'that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.'" (*Op. cit.*, p. 258.) Scripture is clothed with all the majesty of God! — No, we do not worship the paper and the printer's ink, but we do give the words of Scripture, which are God's own words, the holy reverence which is due God. If bibliolatry be that, let there be more of it.

And what is this puerile talk about a "book-religion"? G. Wehrung talks about it: "Cornill has shown that with the solemn reception of Deuteronomy the book-religion was born.

311) M'Intosh: "Yea, so absolute is Paul on this — the trustworthiness, irrefragableness, and divine authority of Holy Writ — that, like Christ, the Scripture is by him personalized and identified with God. 'The Scripture saith unto Pharaoh' (Rom. 9:17), while in Genesis it is the Lord that actually utters the words. . . . And in Gal. 3:8 he says: 'The Scripture, foreseeing.' Thus personal powers and actions are ascribed to Scripture, because God and His Word are identified. Human language could not surpass this in expressing the fact that the Bible is the Word of God, true, trustworthy, and of divine authority." (*Op. cit.*, p. 403.) *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1938, p. 16: "When contemplating the Bible's own claims to inspiration, of great significance indeed are those passages wherein God and His Word are treated as one and the same. Gal. 3:8; Rom. 9:17; Ex. 9:16. . . . God's Word, whether spoken or written, is the identification of Himself."

We add: the legalistic book-religion." (*Geschichte und Glaube*, p. 302.) Many others have taken up the cry.³¹²⁾ The cry does not disconcert us. Our Christian religion is founded upon a Book. A. W. Pink declares in the opening sentence of his book *The Divine Inspiration of the Bible*: "Christianity is the religion of a Book. Christianity is based upon the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture." We are not ashamed to have our religion called a Book religion. Christianity derives its teachings from the Bible; and from the Bible it gets the power to translate these teachings into practice, into a living service. The Bible produces saving faith and a holy life. To be sure, the Christian religion does not consist in memorizing certain doctrines. And the Christian religion is not a mechanical affair. We know all that. But we also know that the only source of true spirituality is the Bible. A spirituality which flows from "the living Christ" apart from the Bible is false. "The words that I speak unto you," the words of My Book, "they are spirit and they are life," John 6: 63.³¹³⁾

312) Harnack: "We do not believe in a book, but in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1886, p. 345.) F. Buechsel deplores "dieses Buchwerden der Offenbarung" and speaks of the dangers that must follow "diesem Vorgang der Schriftwerdung" (*Die Offenbarung Gottes*, pp. 62, 67). *The Lutheran*, Nov. 22, 1928: "We are not founded upon any book nor even on the Scriptures. Christianity is founded upon the living Christ."

313) The thoughts of this and the preceding paragraph are well expressed by B. B. Warfield: "What this church doctrine is, it is scarcely necessary minutely to describe. It will suffice to remind ourselves that it looks upon the Bible as an oracular book—as the Word of God in such a sense that whatever it says God says—not a book, then, in which one may by searching find some word of God but a book which may be frankly appealed to at any point with the assurance that whatever it may be found to say, that is the Word of God. . . . We know how, as Christian men, we approach this Holy Book—how unquestioningly we receive its statements of fact, bow before its enunciations of duty, tremble before its threatenings, and rest upon its promises. . . . As we sit in the midst of our pupils in the Sabbath school or in the center of our circle at home or perchance at some bedside of sickness or of death, or as we meet our fellow men amid the busy work of the world, hemmed in by temptation or weighed down with care, and would fain put beneath him some firm support and stay: in what spirit do we turn to the Bible then? With what confidence do we commend its every word to those whom we would make partakers of its comfort or of its strength? In such scenes as these is revealed the vital faith of the people of God in the surety and trustworthiness of the Word of God." (*Op. cit.*, p. 52 f.) And J. A. Cottam: "These advocates of such looseness charge us that we are worshiping a book. They charge us with being guilty of 'bibliolatry,' a nasty slur which is altogether beside the point. We worship no book, but we do worship the God who sent the Book, and be it ever remembered, that is no true worship of God that slights the Book He has given. If we honor God, we shall honor His Word, and we shall be jealous for that Word." . . . It produces "a holier life, a more pronounced separation from the world, a Christian integrity in business, political honesty, domestic fidelity, and a Christian devotion to the interests of others." (*Know the Truth*, p. 229 f.) That is our Book religion.

We are going to remain God's bondsmen, bound to His Word, bound to every letter of it. To that Verbal Inspiration binds us. Is that legalism? Legalism is an evil thing. If we should ever become guilty of it; if we should, for instance, demand acceptance of this doctrine merely as a matter of legal requirement and not preach it as good news, as a saving doctrine, revealing the grace of God and winning the joyous assent of men, we want the moderns to call us to order for that. But when they call us legalists and literalists and bibliolaters because we are bound by every letter of Scripture, they are out of order. Rather, we shall let them do that and consider these nasty slurs high praise. Bishop C. Gore meant it as dispraise when he wrote: "Luther submitted his judgment undoubtingly to Scriptural statements on points of natural science; and in a famous controversy he appealed to a New Testament verse as an infallible oracle, to be accepted with the purest literalism. In some respects he fastened the letter of the Bible on those who followed him more bindingly than had been done before." (*The Doctrine of the Infallible Book*, p. 58.) May we ever receive this dispraise, this high praise, from the moderns! When they ask us to subscribe to their new charter of liberty, we shall tell them that we have a better one. In the words of Machen: "The Christian man finds in the Bible the very Word of God. Let it not be said that dependence upon a book is a dead or an artificial thing. The Reformation of the sixteenth century was founded upon the authority of the Bible; yet it set the world aflame. Dependence upon a word of man would be slavish, but dependence upon God's Word is life. Dark and gloomy would be the world if we were left to our own devices and had no blessed Word of God. The Bible to the Christian is not a burdensome law, but the very Magna Charta of Christian liberty." (*Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 78.)³¹⁴⁾

314) In the preceding paragraphs the phrases "puerile talk," "nasty slurs," have been used. Rightly so. It seems that the moderns cannot write one chapter on Verbal Inspiration without "becoming utterly unreasonable and illogical" (Pieper's phrase). The present chapter—"legalistic"—is no exception. First and foremost, he is a poor theologian who is ignorant of, or ignores, the truth that there is an obedience to God's Word which proceeds from the Gospel, that it is the Gospel which wins men for Verbal Inspiration.—Then, there is sophistry back of the statements: The Bible is not a defining dictionary (Best), no collection of doctrinal statements, not a legal code. Half truths are untruths.—There is sophistry, the employment of false opposition, in the statements that Christianity is not founded on a book, but on the living Christ, that "the Christian's allegiance is not to a creed or a code or an organization; it is personal loyalty to the Lord" (T. A. Kantonen, *The Message of the Church to the World of Today*, pp. 70, 111). Both are true: Loyalty to Scripture is loyalty to Christ and vice versa. The same applies, in a measure, to the statement of the Pittsburgh Agreement: "The Bible is primarily not a code of doctrines, still less

a code of morals, but the history of God's revelation for the salvation of mankind." And Prof. Grau's argumentation "Let us be on our guard lest we follow the footsteps of our orthodox fathers of the seventeenth century, who, after Luther had freed us from the law of works that ruled in the Middle Ages, established a law of doctrine (*Lehrgesetz*), made of Scripture a large manual of doctrine and in support of that invented their inspiration doctrine. . . . For faith has to do not with doctrine or dogma but with our God Himself and the Son of the Father, Jesus Christ" deserved Professor Stoeckhardt's reply: "Das ist wahrlich ein heilloses Raisonnement ueber Lehre, Dogma, Dogmatik." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1893, p. 328.) — It is pettifoggery when E. Brunner says: "The doctrine of verbal inspiration . . . ruled out the decision of faith." (*The Mediator*, p. 343.) That misrepresents our teaching. H. F. Rall misrepresents our teaching when he describes our "theory as not asking for understanding or conviction but simply submission." (*A Faith for Today*, p. 232.) Dr. Haas writes: "The general attitude of Fundamentalists is to exalt the Bible in a legal way. It is often presented as a code to be followed mechanically." (*What Is Lutheranism?* p. 192.) When the Fundamentalists present the Bible as a code which must be followed, do they really say: to be followed *mechanically*? The "often" does not save the statement from being a misrepresentation. — In all fairness the moderns should not compel us to waste our time in dealing with the insinuation that we view the Bible "als einen vom Himmel gefallenem Gesetzkodex." We dealt with that insinuation by declaring that for a fact the Bible did not grow upon earth. Dr. Pieper takes it up from a different angle and has to waste six lines by pointing out: "Den Vertretern der Verbalinspiration ist so etwas nie eingefallen. Vielmehr lehren sie sehr klar, dass die Heilige Schrift nicht vom Himmel gefallen, sondern hier auf Erden durch Menschen und in menschlicher Sprache aus Eingebung des Heiligen Geistes geschrieben sei." (*Op. cit.*, p. 365.) And McIntosh is right in calling this talk of "slavish literalism" "culpable misrepresentation," "a discreditable caricature." — Analyze the statement of Dr. Fosdick: "At times this endeavor to make the letter of the Bible a binding law has produced the deepest shames and tragedies that Christianity has known, . . . 'Compel them to come in' (Luke 14:23) used as a commandment requiring religious persecution — such are a few samples of the cruel consequences of legalism." (*The Modern Use of the Bible*, p. 239.) It is true that Luke 14:23 has been misunderstood and misapplied in the way indicated. But if we remember that in the parlance of Dr. Fosdick "legalism," "making the letter of the Bible a binding law," is a description of Verbal Inspiration, we shall have to say that Dr. Fosdick is saying something which is not in accord with the facts. Verbal Inspiration does "make the letter of the Bible" a binding law. But Verbal Inspiration cannot be made responsible for the fact that men occasionally misinterpret the letter, the real meaning, of the Bible. — Analyze Dr. Ferm's statement. "The authority of the sacred writings is no longer found in 'the letter' and sustained by some artificial theory of divine inspiration but in the appeal of its spiritual content." (*What Is Lutheranism?* p. 279.) Surely, the "spiritual content" is what counts. But how can we get the "spiritual content" without the letter? Is the "spiritual content" floating in the air and not contained in the letter? — Analyze the concept "Word of God." It cannot be analyzed. It is too hazy and vague, void of definite meaning, indefinable. "Word of God," like the *Schriftganze*, is one of those *sine mente soni* with which modern theology likes to operate. The exact sciences refuse to deal with meaningless terms. Modern theology is not an exact science. — Finally, when the moderns have established what the *Schriftganze* or the "Word of God" teaches, do they tell their people that it does not matter whether these divine truths are accepted or rejected? We have never heard them say so. They demand acceptance of these teachings. But would that not be "legalistic"? In their own interest they ought to put a stop to this talk about "legalism."

The second reason why we refuse to come in under the charter of liberty proclaimed by the moderns is that it establishes spiritual slavery. The moderns have freed themselves from the authority of Scripture but have put on instead the shackles of human authority. They are not willing to submit to the absolute authority of God and His Word but are very willing to make poor man their authority. For one thing, they make "science" their authority in the question of the inerrancy of Scripture. Where Scripture is in conflict with "science," they unquestioningly accept the *dictum* of the scientist, the philosopher, and the higher critic. If you ask them why they charge Scripture with making these innumerable historical and scientific blunders, they tell us: Why, this scientist, that higher critic, says so. They seem to be unable to think that the scientist may be wrong. They hold "science" in such high reverence that they consider it a *crimen laesae maiestatis* when the verbal-inspirationist declares: Scripture is right even though it goes against all "the established results of science" and "the best thought of the day." They are ever ready to uphold the claims of science over against the claim of Scripture. When we urge this claim of Scripture, they begin to rail about "slavish literalism," "legalistic subservience" to Scripture, while they themselves pay abject homage to the scientist and higher critic. What did Dr. Stoeckhardt tell them? "Will you say that secular history gives the lie to Scripture? . . . Are we to correct the Bible history on the authority of occasional scraps in the ancient tradition or the obscure language of the monuments, which are partly contradictory? . . . Das waere Wahnwitz." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1886, p. 315.)

They are slaves, slaves of men, and they are proud of their slavery. In the expressive phrase of W. Moeller, modern theology is happy to act as the flunky and trainbearer of science. "Die heutige Theologie verbeugt sich vor jeder Wissenschaft oder auch oft Pseudowissenschaft und Naturphilosophie, die den Mund etwas voll nimmt, und erklart sich bereit, Schleppentraegerdienste zu tun." (*Um die Inspiration der Bibel*, p. 36.)

The moderns like to raise the charge of biblicism, bibliolatry, against us. They charge us with having too much respect for the Bible. Recall G. Aulén's invective against "Luther's slavish dependence on Bible texts," against "the old biblicism, which restricts the divine revelation to the Bible"; "biblicism, the application of the theory of verbal inspiration, laid its heavy hand on the theology of orthodoxy." "Everywhere the principle of legalism intrudes and molds the theology. That is the disastrous consequence of biblicism." (*Das Chr. Gottesbild*, pp. 251, 255, 386.) These men need to be told what sort of latria they are committing. Erik

Floreen tells them. In his critique of "The 'New Theology' in Sweden" he writes: "Dr. Aulén doesn't seem to regard the Bible as being inspired in any special sense at all. To him Scripture is the Word of God no more nor less than other Christian testimonies in the form of preaching, writing, and song, rendered throughout the history of the Church. Furthermore, it would be legalistic to ground our faith on an outward authority as on that of the Bible, he says. . . . What the liberal theologians fondly point out as a recent progress of revelation is, mainly, a renewed pursuit of that elusive phantom, a theological 'vetenskap,' or science, that would find favor with arrogant human reason. . . . Now and then one of our own writers uses the ridiculous expression, 'Bibliolatry.' Would not someone kindly coin two additional 'latries' to denote the worship of human reason and of 'vedenskapen'?" (See the *Luth. Companion*, Feb. 9, 1939.)

"Dependence upon God's Word is life, but dependence upon a word of man would be slavish." (Machen.) We would rather be bondmen of God and His Word than slaves of men.

Another point. The moderns, who condemn our acceptance of any statement of Scripture as final, stigmatizing that as "legalism" and "slavish literalism," ask us to bow before the authority of the Church and of the theologian. The Church, they say, is the final authority. Recall the statement of Dr. E. E. Flack (hundreds of others could be submitted): "The Word of God is greater than the Book. . . . The standard by which all dogmas and teachers are to be judged is not the Scriptures, standing utterly alone, but the Word of God attested and authenticated in the Spirit-filled life of the early Church and projected through the centuries from faith to faith in the corporate mind of the true Church. . . . The Scriptures have no authority either apart from Christ, who is the primary Authority, or apart from the Church, in which Christ's power is operative." (*The Lutheran*, Sept. 24, Oct. 1, 1936.) It is, then, the Church which gives Scripture its final, real authority. The real authority is the Church. But the Church is made up of men. The moderns are actually asking us to rely for the truth and certainty of our doctrine on the findings and pronouncements of — mere men!

They will even put it this way: the men to tell you what God really revealed in Scripture are the theologians; the common Christian is incapable of finding that out for himself; he must ask the guild of the theologians. — We can understand why the moderns take that position. According to them, what counts is not the words of Scripture but the "Word of God," "Scripture as a whole." And it takes uncommon skill to locate this elusive "Schriftganze," to unravel this enigmatic "Word of God." F. Buechsel tells us, with a sober face, that it "calls for a great measure of

theological ability to find this Word of God, this whole of Scripture." (*Die Offenbarung Gottes*, p. 112.) These men advertise themselves as "specialists." As Dr. Pieper puts it: "It has become the fashion among the experience theologians to talk as though it took specialists, men who are able to interpret 'the historical realities,' to discover the meaning of the individual Scripture statements. In reality, the situation is entirely different. The fact is that every bit of the 'historical reality' which is needed for the understanding of Scripture is provided by Scripture itself, in the context, and any reader or hearer of average intelligence can easily discern it. . . . The Pope declares that Scripture, lacking the interpretation of the 'Church,' is obscure. And modern Protestant theology, having discarded the Scripture principle, talks as though the meaning of the individual Scripture statements can be derived only from 'the full picture of the historical reality,' and that only specialists can give us this picture." (*Op. cit.*, II, p. 131 f.)³¹⁵ This situation is the natural product of the denial of Verbal Inspiration. If the bare statement of Scripture does not suffice to prove the statement, you will have to seek the proof elsewhere; you will have to appeal to other authorities. Dr. Bente puts it this way: "Reason tells these men: 'If the Bible blundered in astronomy, geology, physics, chronology, etc., you can believe the Bible also in *theologicis* only so far as you have established the correctness of its statements from other sources.' The only course of action left, then, to the General Council men is to follow blindly their authorities, Jacobs and Stump (provided that these authorities are

315) It seems incredible that men should be found within the Christian Church who could make the claim that they can tell better than Scripture itself what God really revealed and who tell the common Christian that he must consult them before he can be sure of the matter. But such men actually exist, even in the Protestant churches. Rudolf Hermann had dealings with that kind of theologians. He writes: "Wer wuerde bei einer Botschaft nicht grade im Wortlaut ihren Geist suchen? . . . Wenn nun ihr naeheres Verstaendnis die Theologie vermitteln muss — es genuegt ja schon, an das fremde Sprachgut zu erinnern, in das das Wort gefasst ist —, so tut sie das nicht als *Zwischeninstanz* zwischen dem Wort Gottes und uns Menschen. Vielmehr solche *Zwischeninstanzen* wegraeumen zu helfen, die Alleingueltigkeit von Gottes Selbstoffenbarung auch fuer die Kirche herausstellen zu helfen, ist sie da." (*Theol. Mil.*, XII, p. 10.) W. Vollrath had dealings with such men and writes: "Als ob der Allmaechtige nur durch Maenner, die Universitaeten besucht haben, seine Sache fuehren und in die Wahrheit zu leiten vermoechte! Als ob der Schoepfer eine besondere Vorliebe haette fuer Leute, die Grade erwarben und Lehrstuehle zieren! . . . Statt zu dienen, will er (der Standesduenkel) herrschen; statt zu verbinden, erneuert und befestigt er jene alte Kluft zwischen Laien, denen das Verstaendnis der Schrift unmoeglich sei, und *Sachkundigen*, die vorgeben, hier allein Bescheid zu wissen. . . . Diese Vorwaende fuehren unfehlbar in Schwaermerei. . . . Jenes Gebahren ueberlaesst unsere Kirche getrost den Papisten und Schwaermern alter und neuer Richtung." (*Vom Rittertum der Theologie*, p. 4.)

not appealing to European authorities)" (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1904, p. 87).

But operating with human authorities in spiritual matters imposes spiritual slavery on the Christians. It is a popish abomination. The moderns like to characterize Verbal Inspiration as akin to Roman Catholicism. (E. Brunner, above: "This idolatrous acceptance of Bible authority . . . is analogous to the Roman Church doctrine which requires from the individual believer the same axiomatic obedience to the teachings of the Church," etc.) But it is the moderns who are putting the papistical yoke on the Church. In his essay on Inspiration Rudelbach calls attention to a passage in Luther describing the theological method of the papists and points out that that is a pretty fair description of the doings of the moderns. The passage, using the incident of casting lots for the coat of Jesus as a parable, reads in part (IV:1307 ff.): "All admit what Jesus says, John 10:35: 'The Scripture cannot be broken,' and that its authority is absolutely inviolable, so that no man may contradict or deny it. This premise, or *maior*, that the perfect knowledge of God, theology, must be derived from Scripture all and everyone always admits. But where the *minor* is concerned the soldiers at once make a farce out of Scripture through their arbitrary glosses and distinctions, so that the power and authority of all of Scripture goes by the board. For today, too, you cannot prove anything to the Pope or any Thomist by Scripture, even though they acknowledge the authority of Scripture. 'Let us not rend the coat,' they say, 'but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,' John 19:24. For is that not playing a game of chance with Scripture if one deals with it arbitrarily and twists it according to his whim? Do not the *magistri nostri* of the universities take unto themselves the right to interpret Scripture? And it has reached such a pass that they laugh at him who simply quotes Scripture, while they (as they say) operate with irrefutable arguments of reason. This is the game they play: They do not teach what Scripture demands, but each one tries his luck how he may square Scripture with his own ideas, how much of Scripture he can win. And in this game the Pope is (for that is his due) the chief of the soldiers, for he has passed a law, binding upon all, that it is his privilege, his alone, to interpret Scripture *definitive*. Others, too, may interpret Scripture, but only *magistraliter*, by way of disputation and investigation, not in such a way that their interpretation is final, *determinative*. For he plays with his partners in such a way that the die must fall in his favor, that he alone has the power to interpret Scripture." That fits the moderns fairly well. True, there is this difference that the moderns have gone beyond the Pope in

that they do not acknowledge the supreme authority of Scripture even in theory. There is also this difference that they have not set up one among themselves as the chief. But this description fits absolutely: *nostri magistri* in the seats of learning have taken unto themselves the right to interpret Scripture, and they laugh at him who simply quotes Scripture.³¹⁶⁾ Dealing with one of this ilk, Praelat Dr. Theodor Traub exclaims: "Das fehlte gerade noch. dass wir anstatt des *einen* unfehlbaren Papstes die vielen religionsgeschichtlichen Professoren mit ihren vielen sich widersprechenden Behauptungen als Autoritaeten in Glaubenssachen annehmen muessten!" (*Handreichung fuer Glauben und Leben*, p. 72.) Luther: "Sie suchen ihre eigene Tyrannei, dass sie uns moegen aus der Schrift fuehren, den Glauben verdunkeln, sich selbst ueber die Eier setzen, und *unser Abgott* werden." (V:336.) "They speak such things only in order to lead us away from Scripture and to make themselves *masters over us* that we should believe their dream-sermons" (Traumpredigten). (P. 335.)

We will have none of this! We will not make the Church or any theologian our Pope. "Dependence upon God's Word is life, but dependence upon a word of man would be slavish." We do not feel degraded when we give unquestioning assent to the Bible, to God and His Word; but we would feel debased if we had to give one single point of our Christian faith into the keeping of fallible men.

Once more: the moderns may say at this point that they would not dream of dictating to the faith of the Christian—that they are rather urging the Christian to fight for his rights and be his own authority.—Yes, they are doing that. Recall R. H. Strachan's statement: "Such slave mentality is at the source of religious infallibilities: the infallible Book or the infallible Church. . . . The authority of which we are in quest clearly must be an authority which does not destroy our personal freedom. It must . . . clearly recognize the *autonomy* of the individual personality," etc. (*The Authority of Chr. Experience*, pp. 16, 19.) John Oman's charter of liberty proclaims: "The teacher of divine truth will not care to stop with authorities either of the Church or of the Scriptures." We must no longer "draw doctrines from Holy Writ like legal decisions from the statute book." "Christ encourages His disciples to rise above the rule of authorities and to investigate

316) We must quote one more sentence from our passage. "If you do not yet know who these four soldiers are, I will tell you: they are our honorable *magistri nostri*, who cheat with their *fourfold* sense of Scripture and, foisting their ridiculous interpretations on Scripture, make Scripture ridiculous." The papists played with the hidden sense back of the words. The moderns cheat by operating with the "Word of God" or the "*Schriftganze*" and making Scripture say what they please.

till each is *his own authority*." (*Vision and Authority*, p. 188.) The moderns are actually calling upon the Christians to exercise authority over Scripture, to decide for themselves how much of Scripture may be accepted, how much must be rejected, to become their own authorities. The gross rationalists ask the Christians to set up their reason as the supreme authority. The subtle rationalists ask them to set up their "Christian" judgment as the supreme authority. (Ladd: "The Christian consciousness . . . discerns the Word of God" in the Bible. [*What Is the Bible?* p. 453.] *The Living Church*, Oct. 28, 1931, on "Authority in the Kingdom of God": "Our *ultimate* appeal must be to religious experience and the religious consciousness." A. Schweizer: "It is the business of the Christian spirit to smelt the ore of the Bible and obtain the pure gold." E. Schaeder: "The Spirit-wrought faith applies a sifting process to the Bible word. Through this sifting process it gets the Word of God." Zwingli: "Das Glaubenswort haftet im Geiste der Glaebigen, es selbst wird von niemand gerichtet, sondern von ihm wird das aeußere Wort gerichtet." [See Rudelbach, *Ref. Luth. u. Union*, p. 118.]) There can be no doubt about it, the moderns are asking the individual Christian to occupy the seat of supreme authority. It is a fact—a sorry fact indeed—that "modern theology has the same interest as Rome. According to its own declaration it wants to be freed from Scripture as the only source and standard of theology and instead of Scripture would make the decisive factor in the Church indeed not the ego of the *Pope*, but the 'experience' or — what is the same thing — 'the pious self-consciousness,' the ego of the theologizing subject" (Pieper, *op. cit.*, I, p. 273). This is the situation—the infamous situation: denouncing our reliance on the bare word of Scripture as slavish, the moderns are asking us to assert our own authority.

We cannot do it. It is the height of wickedness.³¹⁷ And it would lead us into slavery. Let no man think that he has achieved freedom when he asserts his autonomy over against Scripture and follows the dictates of his own will. He is a slave to his flesh.

317) It is a form of self-deification. Will not someone, as Erik Floreen would say, coin after the pattern of "Bibliolatry" an additional latria to denote the worship of human reason and of the "Christian consciousness"? — We shall set down again the statement of M'Intosh: "Thus through all the permutations and combinations and through all the multifarious phases of indefinite erroneousness, we are inevitably driven to the old and fatal issues of the common rationalistic principle, namely, that every varying man must become a judge and an authoritative standard himself. Having got rid of an infallible Bible and an infallible Christ, he must reach that supreme absurdity—an infallible self, 'Lord of himself, that heritage of woe,' as Byron says." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 32, 483.) Prof. J. J. Reeve: "When one makes his philosophy his authority, it is not a long step until he makes himself his own God."

He is a willing slave indeed, but a slave he is nevertheless. He hears the call and invitation to put his spiritual affairs into the hands of the gracious Lord and follow His safe guidance, but his proud heart forbids him to do so. And he is unable to disobey his evil flesh. He cannot but submit to the tyrant. And he is proud of his servitude. He does not feel the shame of it.—Dependence upon God's Word is life and liberty; dependence upon a word of man—another's or your own—would be slavish.

There is a third reason why we abhor and abominate the liberty proclaimed by the moderns. The emancipation from the "legalistic yoke" of Verbal Inspiration is fraught with frightful disaster. In the first place, it involves the loss of the Christian doctrine. How many of the Christian doctrines survive under the new order? The first doctrine marked for slaughter by the moderns is, of course, that of Verbal Inspiration itself. They have been filling the world with the cry that Verbal Inspiration is due to "a legalistic conception of Scripture" (*Luth. Church Quart.*); that "there is a spirit of legalism that pervades many of the ranks of Midwestern Lutherans, . . . which insist on 'book, chapter, and verse'" (*Luth. Church Quart.*): that "the older doctrine of inspiration led to the misconception of the Bible as a law code," which older doctrine of inspiration is not based on Scripture but on "an extremist exegesis of 2 Tim. 3:16, 17" (*The Augsburg Sunday School Teacher*); that "God did not inspire the Bible in the rigid, literal manner, known as verbal inspiration"; that, therefore, this doctrine must be "thrown to the moles and the bats with the rest of the world's old, discarded mind-lumber" (J. P. Smith, *How God Inspired the Bible*, p. 118), and that this "verbal literalism" called for by Verbal Inspiration "is hardly congenial in the atmosphere of our conservative Lutheran institutions" (*The Lutheran*). The moderns abhor Verbal Inspiration because their free spirit will not submit to be bound by the words of Scripture—that would be legalistic literalism; and there is great rejoicing in their camp that "it is fast being thrown to the moles and the bats."

The next doctrine to be thrown to the moles and bats is the teaching that Holy Scripture is the sole authority in religion, that the revelation of the divine truth given in Scripture is perfect and final. Bind men to what the fallible apostles wrote? That would be legalistic and bibliolatrous. Accept the teaching of Paul, Peter, and John as the final form of theology? That would make the men of the twentieth century mere catechumens of men of the first century and put the fetters of slavery on the free working of our Christian spirit. No, no, declares Aulén; the heavy hand of biblicism must be removed from theology; and: "A God, whose revelation is represented as having been given only in the past,

is not a living God. . . . This thought militates against the old biblicism which holds that God's revelation is 'closed' in and with the Bible, and thus remains standing in the past." (*Op. cit.*, p. 386.) "Indeed, many would say that what we have in the New Testament is evidence that the faith may never be expected to assume a final form." Thus Edwin Lewis, in *The Faith We Declare*, p. 150. And: "A man may not want to say it in just the way in which Paul said it." (P. 104.) Naturally, for "the early Church" occasionally indulged in erroneous thinking, and "the New Testament naturally reflects this thinking" (*A New Heaven and a New Earth*, p. 175). Why, even Christ is not absolutely reliable, and we may have a better understanding of things than He had. Thus R. Sockman (and a host of others): "In recovering His authority, we can hardly believe that the Christ would wish His followers to go barking at the heels of men, begging their attention. . . . Yet authoritative as the centuries have found Him to be, what are nineteen hundred years in the life of the race? Can we say that the Christ of Nazareth has given us the final wisdom? May not the future outgrow Him?" (*Recoveries in Religion*, p. 70.) The theology of the Bible is thus not final; the Christian experience and the Christian consciousness must supplement it. What did *A Creed for Free Men* (W. A. Brown) tell us? "The Bible is a compendium of simple principles capable of indefinite application and therefore needing continual reinterpretation in the light of expanding experience." H. C. Sheldon has a chapter in his *System of Christian Doctrine* on the "Question of the Sufficiency of the Biblical Revelation, or of the Possibility of Authoritative Supplements" (p. 149) and says: "A few words will be appropriate on the question whether revelation needs, or admits of, any authoritative supplements." The answer is that "it is the vocation of the Christian consciousness" to serve as such a supplement.³¹⁸⁾ The doctrine of the final and sole authority of Holy Scripture has gone by the board.

318) It is about time that somebody give us a definition of this Christian consciousness which tells us which parts of the Bible we may accept and which truths we are to accept in place of those teachings of the Bible which we must reject or which we find inadequate. This is Sheldon's definition: "What is 'Christian consciousness' but a name for the cardinal judgments and feelings of Christians, their religious modes both in the line of thought and emotion? It may be defined in brief as the educated reason and feeling of Christian believers." — We don't think much of this "Christian consciousness" in its role of testing and supplementing Scripture. Aside from the fact that the Christian commits a crime when he permits it to dictate to Scripture, he will never know how to pin it down to a definite statement. As everybody knows, our emotions and feelings are constantly changing. Besides, only the cardinal feelings are authorized to speak. But the Christian will never know whether his present feeling is a cardinal or a second-rate feeling.

In fact, according to the consistent moderns, we really do not need the Bible at all. We might be able to get along without it—just as at one time people did get along without it. It would be another form of this wicked Bibliolatry to say the contrary. Let R. F. Horton speak on this point: "Strange to say, the Christians of whom we speak do not even notice that the New Testament is itself a record of the Christian faith being propagated at a wonderfully rapid rate without a New Testament at all. Peter had no writings to appeal to except the Old Testament Scriptures; Paul preached 'his Gospel' without any reference to a written Gospel, and never hinted that the further preaching of the faith should depend even on his own epistles. It may as well be frankly stated that the frantic and superstitious faith in the apostolic writings, a faith going far beyond what they claim or suggest themselves, may be simply the outcome of unbelief. People who are sunk in this kind of Bibliolatry, etc. . . . They really worship the Scriptures instead of the living God and make a slavish and unreasoning acceptance of all that is written take the place of an inward subjection to God, and a realized experience of His personal manifestation to the believing heart." (*Revelation and the Bible*, p. 218.) There is no *absolute* need of the Bible.

Oh, yes, the Bible has its use. It should be studied; but bear in mind, what it says is "*suggestive* rather than dictatorial" (G. L. Raymond); it gives merely "*the initial data*" (R. W. Nelson); it contains good "*principles*, which, however, need continual re-interpretation" (W. A. Brown). It was never intended, say the moderns, as the sole source of doctrine.

Having gotten rid of Verbal Inspiration and the authority of Holy Scripture, the moderns are ready for the other Christian doctrines. Having set up the principle that it would be legalistic and slavish to bow to every word of Scripture, they feel free to change—discard—any Biblical teaching. Calling upon the Christians "to break with this legalistic employment of Scripture," H. E. Fosdick refuses to teach the deity, the real deity, of Jesus, the vicarious atonement, the resurrection of Jesus, and the resurrection of the flesh, eternal damnation, etc., etc. E. Brunner ful-

"It is the *educated* reason and feeling of believers." How shall the Christian know whether he is dealing with his educated or his old carnal feeling? He may believe that his reason and feeling of the moment is educated; how will he convince his brother, who reasons and feels quite differently, that the latter needs more education? Again, where shall we find an authoritative summary of the feeling of the Christian believers? This "Christian consciousness" is just about as hazy, indefinite, and cryptic as those two other favorite concepts of the moderns: the *Schriftganze* and the "Word of God."

minates against "this idolatrous acceptance of Bible authority" and is thus in a position to rejoice over "the victory of biological evolutionism," etc., etc. (*Op. cit.*, p. 92, 98). Bishop Aulén says it would be legalistic to ground our faith on an outward authority, as on that of the Bible, and so, as E. Floreen points out, "he finds himself justified in offering us a picture of Jesus quite different from that presented by the evangelists. The deity of the Savior is denied. . . . Dr. Aulén's teaching of the last things also departs considerably from Scripture. . . . It is supposed that an opportunity of conversion will be given after death." Must the real presence in the Lord's Supper be maintained? When Aulén declaims against "Luther's slavish dependence on Bible texts," he particularizes: "The classical example of this is Luther's argumentation in the controversy on the Lord's Supper." (*Op. cit.*, p. 251.) Bishop Gore (and countless others) take the same position. Let us hear his statement again: "In a famous controversy Luther appealed to a New Testament verse as an infallible oracle." Applying the principle that it is the business of the theologian "to teach the old truth in a new way, and, following the promptings of the Spirit of God, to augment and increase it," Hofmann gave the Church a doctrine of the Atonement which denies the *satisfactio vicaria*, etc. (See Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 74.) And P. Althaus, working under Hofmann's charter of liberty, has told us that eschatology and the doctrine of justification must assume new forms. — How many Christian doctrines remain intact under the new charter of liberty? *Christendom*, as quoted in our first article, says: "The account of the creation in Genesis, the Christmas story of the Incarnation, the resurrection of the body of Christ, . . . the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, the doctrine of the virgin birth and the divinity of Christ — all these conceptions, intended at first quite literally, have for many devout Christians today only a symbolic function. . . . Hence they are still scrupulously retained, lovingly cherished, but considered as poetic expressions of some profounder or larger truth than that which their formulators realized." Dr. Muenkel, as quoted in Pieper (*op. cit.*, p. 157), reports thus: "There is hardly one doctrine left which has not, in a marked degree, been subjected to recastings, additions, and eliminations. Starting with the Trinity, proceeding to the doctrine of the person and the office of Christ, to the doctrines of faith and justification, of the Sacraments, and of the Church, down to eschatology, you will scarcely find anything in its old form and with its former value. Often it is changed to such a degree that only the old frame still reminds one of the old picture, and at times even the frame has been smashed as being too narrow and out of date. A small sample to illustrate this: While Christ

according to the Church doctrine is true God also in His state of humiliation, they now have emptied Him of the divine attributes,"³¹⁹) "without which no one can conceive of the deity, or they let Him gradually grow into His deity and achieve it in His resurrection. The death of Christ is no longer permitted to be taught as satisfying for our sins and reconciling us to God. The righteousness of faith, consisting in God's declaring us righteous, is said to be too wooden and external; in a covert manner the works are again brought in. Law and Gospel are again being churned together. . . . Would anyone dare to speak of development of the Lutheran doctrine when the most important parts of the Lutheran doctrine are swept out of doors like old rubbish? . . ." How much is left of the Christian doctrine where men operate with this new charter of liberty?

The liberals among the moderns have made a clean sweep of it. The conservative groups have retained some or many of the Christian doctrines. And still we maintain that the application of the principle of freedom from the letter of Scripture, of the right to develop the doctrine, involves the loss of the Christian doctrine. The only reason why the conservative moderns have not cast overboard all Biblical teachings is that, by the grace of God, they do not consistently apply their principle. "We ask," says L. Gaussen, "where do they mean to stop in the course they have begun? And by what reason would they stop those, in their turn, who would fain advance farther than they are willing to go? They make bold to correct one saying of God's Word; what right, then, have they to censure those who would rectify all the rest? . . . Where will you find the difference? It is in the species, not in the genus. It is in the quantity, and no longer in the quality, of imputations of error and tokens of irreverence. There is a difference in point of hardihood, none at all in point of profanation." (*Theopneustia*, p. 201.) Some of the moderns have not the hardihood to apply the principle under which they reconstruct — abolish — the doctrine of the vicarious atonement to the doctrine of the deity of Christ and of the Trinity. God has graciously kept them from going so far. But left to themselves they would all land in the

319) To illustrate, V. Ferm says: "We might well question whether or not the Christological doctrines of the ubiquity of Christ's body (a quasi-materialistic and pan-Christic doctrine borrowed from Duns Scotus), and *communicatio idiomatum* are satisfactory even from a Biblical point of view. Even the position which Luther himself took on the interpretation of the Eucharist may fairly be challenged as a necessarily true Biblical exegesis. The literalism applied to certain Biblical passages, etc. . . . The authority of the Sacred Writings is no longer found in 'the letter,' and sustained by some artificial theory of divine inspiration, but in the appeal to its spiritual content." (*What Is Lutheranism?* p. 279 f.)

camp of modernism, liberalism. Hofmann's principle which permits him to teach the old truth in a new way, in such a way as to augment the old truth, is identical with Fosdick's principle: The Gospel must be "released from literal bondage to old categories and set free to do its work in modern terms of thought and speech" (*op. cit.*, p. 261), and nothing but the grace of God will keep the followers of Hofmann from becoming followers of Fosdick. Professor Bente solemnly warns the Church: "Men hate and assault the doctrine of verbal inspiration because it clamps the modern spirit which would be free of all authority. But when the dam of verbal inspiration is once broken, there is nothing to prevent the flood of modern rationalism from sweeping over the old orthodoxy." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1910, p. 89.)

And we know what the chief concern, the fundamental doctrine, of rationalism is. It is salvation through works. The one important concern of rationalism is ethics. M. H. Krumbine tells us: "The one thing we know definitely about Jesus is His ethical teaching." (*Ways of Believing*, p. 71.) Shailer Mathews: "If Christians are to be interested in helping to make a better world, the Churches must make theology secondary to morality embodying the spirit of Jesus." (*The Church and the Christian*, p. 105.) And W. Herrmann, who insists that "such a principle of the authority of Scripture would set a book above God's revelation," proclaims his rationalism when he says: "The fundamental thought of Jesus' Gospel is that it is in God's rule in our hearts that our salvation consists." (*Syst. Theol.*, pp. 58, 115.) And the conservative moderns are headed towards this heathen heresy. Dr. Muenkel sees the development: "In a covert manner the works are drawn in again. Law and Gospel are again being churned together."³²⁰ There can be no other development. Man is a born legalist, and if we permit our thoughts—call it reason outright or call it "Christian consciousness"—to correct or supplement the Scripture teaching, we shall inevitably gravitate toward the heathen doctrine of salvation through the Law.—What a tragic development! Here are men constantly mouthing the word "legalistic" and refusing to submit to "law"—and they end up by becoming slaves of the Law.

The loss of the Christian doctrine—that is the fatal consequence of the contention that Verbal Inspiration has a legalistic cast.

It has another evil consequence. It inflicts unspeakable harm on the Christian. (1) The Christian needs the Christian doctrine.

³²⁰ To illustrate, R. Jelke teaches that faith justifies because "that which Christ performed is reproduced in him (the believer) potentially, ethically," "dass sich in ihm das von Christo Geleistete potentiell, ethisch wiederholt." (*Die Grunddogmen des Christentums*, p. 64.)

His salvation is bound up with the *saving* doctrine, and we have just seen what happens to the Christian doctrine where the new charter operates, where men denounce adherence to the letter as legalistic and assume the right to manipulate and develop the Biblical teaching. Then what happens to the Christian who is under the spiritual care of the ultraliberal modern? Can faith survive where all the doctrines of the Church, the deity of Christ, the vicarious atonement, justification by faith alone, are denied? It cannot survive under the ministration of the liberal. And what happens to the Christian under the ministration of the conservative modern, who operates with a half or a fourth or a tenth of the Christian doctrine? The Christian needs the whole of the Christian doctrine. Oh, yes, God can save him, God is saving many who are being deprived by their teachers of much of the Christian doctrine. Their faith clings to, and is nourished by, the remnants of the saving truth left them. But they are in a sad state. Their faith is undernourished. God wants His Christians to live not by a fraction of the truth but by the whole truth. God wants a vigorous faith, and He has well provided for that. The moderns, however, withhold from God's children the wholesome food God has provided. The food which they provide is—if we may use a homely simile—lacking in necessary vitamins. The general situation obtaining in the Church today is well described by Dr. E. J. M. Nutter, dean of Nashotah House, in these words: "A horrid suspicion has been gaining ground here for some time, that in our threshing of the Word of God we have been throwing away the wheat, and dreadfully chewing on the chaff."³²¹ The moderns are committing

321) Let us submit a few more statements by Dr. Nutter. They bear on the *general* subject of our writing. "We are sure that in pounding theology into our students we are not being stubbornly antiquated in a liberal and undogmatic world, but are heading the procession home. . . . Should the clergy and laity of this Church once realize that the Nicene Faith is in peril, the reaction is likely to be astonishing. It is for the preservation and promulgation of the Nicene Faith that Nashotah labors; and in our defense of such orthodox dogmas as the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, and a Resurrection, neither metaphorical nor hallucinatory, we shall not budge. Our attitude to the Holy Scriptures is equally firm. Of course, we know all about J, E, D, P and Q. We are acquainted with the Johannine problems. We even devote time to discussing such erudite subjects as form-criticism. This is what is called scholarship. But a horrid suspicion is gaining ground here for some years, that in our threshing of the Word of God we have been throwing away the wheat and dreadfully chewing on the chaff. . . . Untold harm has been done to Christianity in all its several sections by the uninspired ministry of men who only know what the Bible is not; and the saddest side of it is that the anticipated stampede of the intelligentsia into the Church, which was to follow the abandonment of miracle, has not taken place. A return to a Scripture that is

a crime against God's children when they take away from their table much of the wheat of the saving doctrine and make them chew on chaff. They are raising an anemic, stunted generation. Oh, yes, there may be enough nourishment left to keep them alive, but this, too, may occur: some poor soul may not have strength enough to throw off the noxious effect of the false teaching set before him. And this may occur: in the hour of trial the poor soul may forget the saving truth, put its trust on a false teaching, and lose its salvation. The loss is on the head of him who tells people not to rely absolutely on the letter of Scripture.

(2) Under the new charter of liberty the Christian can have no assurance of faith. We shall treat this more fully in the concluding article.

(3) The new-liberty men exert an evil influence on the Christian in this way, too, that they systematically train him in developing his pride of reason, the self-conceit of his flesh. They are instructing him to set his own judgment, his "Christian consciousness," or whatever you want to call it, over Scripture. The Christian faith is humble. That belongs to its very nature—believing is accepting and trusting the Word of God. The Christian faith submits to every word of Scripture and is outraged when Satan suggests that the Christian may know more about these things than the holy writers or may be able to express God's eternal thoughts better than they, than the Holy Ghost did. The Christian layman and the Christian theologian are content to sit at the feet of the prophets and take their wisdom from them. As Luther puts it: "Our pride is that we are catechumens and pupils of the prophets, that we repeat after them and preach what we heard from the prophets and apostles." (III:1890.) "Und nichts Eigenes oder Neues setzen" (*loc. cit.*)—not attempt to "teach the old truth in a new way, add to it for the purpose of improving on it." But the moderns will not have the Christians take this attitude. When the moderns declaim that "they have attained *higher forms* than the prophets" (J. De Witt); when they virtually declare: "The truth is, man of today has altogether outgrown the Bible. It may have done for the infant state of the human mind, but to put the rising generation under its clamps and chains would be to restrict the mental growth of the human race" (see J. M. Haldeman, *A King's Penknife*, p. 108): they are causing the seed of wicked pride which is implanted in the heart of man

really holy is imperative if our religion is to survive. . . ." (*The Living Church*, May 17, 1942.) — We have taken the liberty to generalize the statement concerning the chewing on the chaff and to apply it to what Hofmann and the rest offer the Church under the trademark "Die alte Wahrheit auf neue Weise zu lehren."

to germinate and flourish. What thoughts must arise in the heart of the Christian when his teacher tells him: "Faith refuses to make a legalistic use of individual passages or of the entire Scripture. . . . We must be in accord with Luther and his spirit of freedom and apply this touchstone to every word of Scripture: Does it give expression to the Gospel as Gospel, the pure and clear Gospel" (G. Wehrung, *Geschichte und Glaube*, pp. 306, 308)? The Old Adam in the Christian's heart will pride himself on being given the right to subject Scripture to his judgment. The Christian faith cannot do what Wehrung and the others are asking it to do. The rationalist, indeed, "comes to the Bible and sits over its contents in the attitude of a judge who is to decide for himself what in it is true and worthy to be believed, . . . not in the attitude of the disciple, who within the limits of the inspired record feels himself at Jesus' feet to receive every word that cometh out of His mouth" (J. Bannerman). And the moderns are training their pupils in rationalistic pride and arrogance. This pride is an evil thing. "When we begin to be so proud and overweening as to judge according to our reason" on any doctrine of Scripture, . . . "then we are rude fellows, thinking more of our blind and poor reason than of the statements of Scripture. For Scripture is God's own witness concerning Himself, and our reason cannot know the divine nature; yet it wants to judge concerning that about which it knows nothing" (Luther, X:1018). Christian faith and pride, self-conceit, self-deification, do not go together. If this pride is not checked, it will destroy faith. And the moderns, asking the Christians to correct, improve on, reject Scripture, are cultivating this malignant thing.

This is St. Paul's judgment of the new charter of liberty: "If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing," 1 Tim. 6:3 f.³²²) We shall remain under the charter given by our Lord: "If ye continue in My Word," in the word of Holy Scripture, "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," John 8:31 f.

(To be concluded)

TH. ENGELDER

322) Moffatt's translation hits off some points very well: "Anyone who teaches novelties and refuses to fall in with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine that tallies with godliness, is a conceited, ignorant creature."

Luther's Theological Method

The Last of Three Public Lectures Delivered at Concordia Seminary,
St. Louis, Mo., April 17, 1942

When Luther began his theological studies at the Augustinian convent in Erfurt in 1505, the teaching of theology in the universities and its practice by the clergy were in a deplorable condition. At that time Luther did not realize this fact, but as he proceeded with his studies, his eyes were opened, and he stood aghast at the havoc that had been wrought on true theology.

Two cancerous growths were eating out the very life of that study of the knowledge unto salvation which God had opened up to men in His Holy Book. One was the dominant, determining influence on theology which had been accorded the teachings of the Greek philosopher Aristotle, a pupil of Plato and the teacher of Alexander the Great. He had lived from 384 to 322 B. C. mostly at Athens, from which he fled when a charge of atheism was preferred against him. He had been a master in the application of human reason to everything known and knowable. In his treatise on logic he has laid down rules of correct thinking that have never been antiquated. He is still rightly studied at our universities.

But Aristotle was a heathen. He had never seen our Bible nor heard of Jesus Christ. To submit the Christian teachings to the decisions of this heathen, seems an abnormal, unnatural undertaking. However, this very thing was done during the dark ages of the Church. All religious teaching became overlaid with Aristotelian ideas. Shields, in his *Final Philosophy*, P. I, p. 33, says: "The doctrines of St. John were sublimated into the abstractions of Plato."

When Luther himself began to teach theology, he felt the unbearable strain which the alliance of Biblical teaching with Aristotelian philosophy must cause any sincere believer. Gradually, as he proceeded with the interpretation of Scripture from Scripture itself, he began to voice his dissent from Aristotle with growing determination. One can feel, when reading his letters, how his spirit groaned within him for having to teach Aristotle, because that was an indispensable requisite for obtaining an academic degree in those days. Finally he could not repress his disgust any longer, and on September 4, 1517, he published ninety-seven theses, in which he called in question the value of Aristotle's works as textbooks in theology. These theses, which antedate the famous ninety-five theses against the sale of indulgences by nearly two months, can be found in the St. Louis edition of Luther's Works in vol. 18, cols. 18-27; in the Weimar edition in vol. 1, pp. 221-228.

The theses proved a sensation in university circles. Luther purposely sent them to Erfurt to test their effect on his old teachers Trutvetter and Usingen, although he surmised their verdict in advance. For these men had grown gray in the scholastic teaching of that age and in their theology had become ossified Aristotelians. Sure enough, the opinion that was expressed about his theses was that Luther was too presumptuous, too haughty and conceited in his assertions, and too ready to condemn the opinions of his betters. But in the circle of younger university men, who had, like Luther, chafed under the Aristotelian yoke, Luther's theses were felt to be a liberating act. In Wittenberg they were applauded from all sides, and Magister Franz Guenther of Nordhausen, who defended the theses September 5 in public disputation for his bachelor degree in theology, was given his promotion with the unanimous consent of all the dons of the university. A former Wittenberg professor by the name of Christoph Scheurl, who had moved to Nuernberg, when reading the theses, sensed in them the coming reformer and the great revolution in the teaching of theology. Instead of the usual form of address he began his letter to Luther of November 4 with the words: "Christi theologiam restaurare!" that is: "Set up again the theology of Christ!" St. L. Ed. 21 a:76.

Regarding the university of Wittenberg Luther had already on May 18 of that year written his friend Lang at Erfurt: "Our theology and St. Augustine prosper and reign here, by God's help. Aristotle is gradually tottering to a fall from which he will hardly rise again, and the lectures on the *Sentences* are wonderfully disrelished. No professor can hope for students unless he offers courses in the new theology, that is, on the Bible, or St. Augustine, or some other ecclesiastical authority." (Quoted in Preserved Smith, *Martin Luther*, p. 26.) The *Sentences* to which Luther refers in this letter was a textbook in dogmatics by the Roman theologian Petrus Lombardus, a native of Italian from Novara in Lombardy, who became the great light of the university of Paris (1107—1160). It was built up entirely on the philosophy of Aristotle. Its study was required as absolutely essential in every university of Europe, and to become a "sententiarius," that is, a lecturer on the Lombard's book, was the cherished hope and ambition of every young theologian.

Five years later, in 1522, soon after his return from his Wartburg exile, Luther reviewed his efforts to put the reigning scholastic theology with its Aristotelian veneer out of the Church. The occasion was this: A collection of minor writings by John Pupper von Goch, the pious prior of the Augustinian convent Thabor, near Malines, had been published at Zwolle. Luther issued a congratulatory epistle about this event, in which he recorded with

joy that similar writings of Tauler and Wessel, and especially the treatise *Deutsche Theologie*, German Theology, had been published previously and that the writers of all these books had been fellow soldiers with him, fighting for the honor of sacred theology, that is, the Sacred Scriptures, against the scholastic theologians and the bellweather of this herd, Aristotle. The fighting, Luther says, had been sharp: many had thought it too sharp; but this festering boil on the body of Christianity had to be cut with a sharp scalpel. Now let all his polemical writings perish and their place be taken by the fine writings of these German, and german, theologians! Weimar, 10, II, 329 f.

The other evil which Luther had to combat very early in his career was the opposition of what he calls "the theologians of glory" to the real theologians, whom he calls "the theologians of the cross." He refers to them in these terms in theses which he debated in a public discussion at Heidelberg April 16, 1518. In Theses 19 to 21 he contended for the following points: Thesis 19: "Not he will be rightly called a theologian who regards the invisible things of God as comprehended in that which is made." In the disputation Luther elaborated this thesis thus: "This is plain from what the apostle says about them that were such in Rom. 1:22, where he calls them fools. Moreover, the invisible things of God are virtue, deity, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, etc. The knowledge of all these matters, however, makes a person neither worthy nor wise." Thesis 20 reads: "But he who comprehends the visible and minor things of God as he perceives them by means of the cross and suffering." In the disputation Luther elaborated this thesis as follows: "The minor and visible things of God, viz., what is human weakness and foolishness, are placed over against divine matters; as Paul does in 1 Cor. 1:25, where he calls them the weakness and foolishness of God. For since men misused the knowledge derived from His works, God in turn desired to be known through suffering and rejected that wisdom of invisible things; in order that in this manner those who do not worship God as He is revealed in His works, should worship Him as He is hidden in sufferings, as we read 1 Cor. 1:21: 'For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' Hence it is no longer sufficient for any one, and, moreover, it is useless, to know God in His glory and majesty, if he does not recognize Him in the humiliation and shame of the cross. Thus He puts to shame the wisdom of the wise, as Isaiah says, ch. 45:15: 'Verily, Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Savior.'

"Likewise, when Philip according to the theology of glory said:

'Lord, show us the Father,' Jesus promptly drew back Philip's flighty thought, trying to look for God elsewhere, and directed him to Himself, saying: 'Philip, he that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father,' John 14:8, 9. Therefore, the true theology and knowledge of God is in Christ crucified, even as He says, John 14:6: 'No one cometh unto the Father, but by Me,' and John 10:9: 'I am the Door.' Lastly, Thesis 21 reads: "A theologian of glory calls good what is evil, and evil what is good; a theologian of the cross names things as they are," which Luther elaborated thus during the debate: "This is evident; for if he does not know Christ, he does not know the God that is hidden in suffering. Therefore he prefers his pious works to suffering, the glory to the cross, strength to weakness, wisdom to foolishness, and, in general, what seems good to him to what seems evil. Of this kind are those whom the apostle calls "enemies of the cross of Christ," Phil. 3:18, especially because they hate the cross and suffering and love their works and the glory which they gain thereby; and thus they call the good of the cross evil, and the evil of their works good. However, that God cannot be found except in the cross and affliction has already been stated. Therefore, the friends of the cross say, that the cross is good and men's works evil. For by the cross men's works are destroyed, the old Adam crucified, who is rather exalted by men's works. For it is impossible that a person should not become puffed up over his good works, who has not first been humbled and crushed by the cross and endurance of evil; until he knows that he is worth nothing and the true works are not his, but God's." St. L. Ed., 18:50 f., Weimar, 1, 361 f.

What Luther chastised in this debate at Heidelberg was the utter worldliness, the deep-rooted externalism of the Church, calculated to elevate its clergy in the eyes of the unthinking multitudes by a great holy show, which pervades Romanism. There was the stupid mechanical religiousness by means of prescribed prayers, fasts, observance of saints' days and holidays and superstitious rites, coupled with the striving for outward pomp by imposing ceremonies, the insatiate lust for worldly distinction, prerogative, and power of a proud clergy, from its lowest to its highest rank in the hierarchy, including the Pope. The self-indulgence and laziness of the monks was proverbial; their intemperance and their voluptuous living, their unchastity as well as that of parish priests, bishops, cardinals, and the Popes themselves, together with their flagrant greed and arrogance were openly acknowledged vices of the priesthood, while the contemplative musings of a few mystics in their comfortable seclusion were worthless contributions to true theology. The spirit of the

meek and lowly Christ was utterly foreign to this type of theologians.

The best commentary on Luther's denunciation of the theologians of glory appeared three years later. It grew out of the criticism of Luther which we have just heard. It is that famous series of twenty-six cartoons by the Wittenberg artist Lucas Kranach, for which Luther wrote an introduction, explanatory footnotes, and a conclusion. They were published about the middle of May, 1521, after Luther had made his defense before Emperor Charles V at Worms. They show in striking contrast the spirit of Christ, the theologian of the cross, and the spirit of Antichrist, the theologian of glory. You will find them in the St. Louis Edition, Vol. 14, 198—249; in the Weimar Edition, Vol. 9, 701—715. You will enjoy them, as did the people all over Europe, who saw them when they first came out. They were republished in a new edition by the artist Hofmann during the Kulturkampf, the political conflict of the German government with the Vatican, and Emperor William I sent a copy to the Pope.

Seven years before Luther's death the first volume of his collected German writings was published at Wittenberg in 1539. Luther wrote a preface to this volume, in which he deposited the experience of his life, which was then drawing to its close, on the study of theology. He says: "I want to show you a correct method for studying theology, in which I have trained myself. If you adopt it, you will become so learned that, if it were necessary, you yourself would be qualified to produce books just as good as those of the Fathers and the church councils. Even as I dare to be so bold in God as to pride myself, without arrogance or lies, as not being greatly behind some of the Fathers in the matter of making books. I cannot by a long shot make the same boast as regards my life.

"Now, the method to which I referred is the one which the pious King David teaches in the 119th Psalm; and which, no doubt, was practiced by all the patriarchs and prophets. In the 119th Psalm you will find three rules, which are abundantly expounded throughout the Psalm. They are called: *Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio*; Prayer, Meditation (Study), Trials.

"In the first place, you must understand that Holy Scripture is a book such as will make the wisdom of all other books appear as foolishness, because none of them teach anything concerning life everlasting except this one alone. Therefore you must simply despair of your own mind and intellect; for by their means you will not achieve Scriptural theology, but by such presumption you will thrust yourself and others with you out of heaven into the abyss of hell, as happened to Lucifer. But this is what you

must do: Kneel down in your closet and pray God in true humility and earnestness to give you His Holy Spirit, who is to enlighten, guide, and give you understanding.

"Even as you observe that David in the Psalm aforementioned continually prays: Lord, teach me, instruct me, guide me, show me, and in many more terms of this kind. And this he does in spite of the fact that he well knew the text of Moses and of many other books, and heard and read them daily. Still he wants to have the real Master of the Scriptures at his side, so as not by any means to plunge into them with his reason and become master himself. For that is what turns men into unruly fanatics, who imagine that the Scriptures are subject to them and their meaning easily attained by their reason; as if they were books like that of Marcolfus, or Aesop's Fables, for the understanding of which the Holy Ghost and prayer are not necessary.

"In the second place, you are to meditate, and that not only in the heart alone but also externally, by turning over and over again orally the discourse and the words in the Book, letter by letter, reading and rereading with diligent attention and reflection as to what may be the meaning of the Holy Spirit. And have a care, lest you become surfeited with reading or imagine you have read, heard, recited a text once or twice and that's enough and that you have a thorough understanding of it. For in that manner a person never will become much of a theologian. He will be like sickly fruit that drops from the tree before it is half ripe.

"That is why you notice that David in this Psalm continually glories in the fact that he will speak, compose, recite, hear, read, day and night, and continuously, however nothing but the Word and commandments of God alone. For God will not give you His Holy Spirit except through the external Word; don't forget that! For He has not commanded in vain to put things down in writing, to preach, read, hear, sing, recite, etc.

"In the third place, there is *Tentatio*, affliction: that is the proving, or test stone, which teaches you not only to know and understand, but also to experience, how right, how true, how sweet, how delightful, how powerful, how comforting the Word of God is, Wisdom above all wisdom.

"That is why you observe how David in the aforementioned Psalm so often complains about all sorts of enemies, about reckless rulers and tyrants, about false spirits and unruly fanatics, who afflict him for the reason that he is in all kinds of ways engaged upon the Word of God, as afore stated. For as soon as the Word of God gets a start through your labors, the devil will visit you, to make you a genuine doctor, and by tribulations teach you to seek and to love God's Word. For, if I may mingle my worthless

self with the precious experience of others (Luther says: "Wenn ich Mäusedreck unter den Pfeffer mengen darf"), I may say that I am greatly indebted to my papists, because through the raging of the devil they have so thoroughly thrashed and straitened and frightened me that they have made a fairly good theologian out of me, which I would not have become without them. On the other hand, what they have gained from me, they are heartily welcome to all the honors, victories, and triumphs they have achieved; for that's what they wanted.

"Behold, there you have David's rule. If you will study well after his example, you will join him in singing and glorying, as he does in this Psalm, v. 72: 'The Law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.' Likewise in vv. 98-100: 'Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts.' And you will find out how stale and sluggish the writings of the Fathers will appear to you. Moreover, you will not only hold the writings of our adversaries in contempt but will in the course of time be less pleased with your own writing and teaching. When you have reached that point, you may confidently hope that you have made a beginning of being a true theologian who is able to teach, not only the young and imperfect Christians, but also those who are advancing toward perfection. For the Church of Christ contains all sorts of Christians: young, old, frail, sick, sound, strong, alert, lazy, silly, wise, etc.

"However, if you feel, or conceive the notion, that you have surely 'become it' and are tickled with your own booklets, your teaching and writing, as if you had produced something very precious and had preached excellently; moreover, if you are pleased when others praise you and are looking for praise, because otherwise you would become despondent and quit working — if you are that kind of a critter, my dear, take hold of yourself by the ears, and if you grab right, you will find a beautiful pair of big, long, rough ass's ears. Then risk the expense and decorate them with little golden bells, so that, wherever you go, people can hear you and point you out, saying: 'There goes the fine beastie that can write such precious books and preach so splendidly.' Then you will be happy and superhappy in your heaven; yea, where the hellish fire is prepared for the devil and his angels.

"To sum up, let us seek honor and be proud where we have a right to be. In this Book all honor belongs to God alone; and it is written: "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the

humble. To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." St. L. Ed. 14:434—437: Weimer Ed. 50, 657—661.

That is Luther's theological method in a nutshell. Out of it sprang the maxim by which generations of Missouri Synod pastors, professors, teachers, regulated their theological studies: *Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio faciunt theologum*, that is, A theologian becomes such by prayer, meditation, and trials. There was another axiom that we memorized: *Quo propior Luthero, eo melior theologus*, which means: The closer you approach to Luther, the better theologian you are. The Missouri Synod's teachers have been a shining proof of this. May this continue to be their γνώρισμα, the mark by which they are known at home and abroad. God bless our St. Louis Concordia, its faculty, and its students. Amen.

Berkeley, Calif.

W. H. T. DAU

Der 90. Psalm

(Der Pastoralkonferenz des Süd-Wisconsin-Distrikts vorgelegt und auf deren Beschluß eingesandt von Rudolf Schroth)

V. 1: „Ein Gebet Moses, des Mannes Gottes.“ — Die englische Bibel (King James Version; im folgenden bezeichnet mit A. V.) hat diesen Vers als Überschrift: „A prayer of Moses, the man of God.“ Der Psalm ist ein Gebet Moses, מֹשֶׁה. Das ך ist das ך auctoris, das den Psalm Mose als Verfasser zuschreibt. Es ist der einzige Psalm, den wir von ihm haben, und zugleich der älteste Psalm. — Mann Gottes, אֱלֹהִים-אִישׁ. Dieser Gottesname, wohl pluralis majestaticus, bezeichnet Gott als den wahren Gott im Gegensatz zu den nichtigen Götzen, die אֱלִילִים, Nichtse, heißen. Mann Gottes heißt Moses auch sonst: Deut. 33, 1: „Dies ist der Segen, damit Moses, der Mann Gottes, die Kinder Israel vor seinem Tode segnete.“ Jos. 14, 6 sagt Kaleb zu Josua: „Du weißest, was der Herr zu Moses, dem Mann Gottes, sagte.“ Esra 3, 2 ist die Rede von dem „Gesetz Moses, des Mannes Gottes“. Dieser Titel reißt den Autor des Psalms ein in die Zahl der heiligen Männer, von denen 2 Petr. 1, 21 gilt: „Die heiligen Menschen Gottes haben geredet, getrieben von dem Heiligen Geist.“ Moses redet in diesem Psalm, was Gott ihn gelehrt hat. Und das sind Wahrheiten, die allen Geschlechtern aller Zeiten gelten. — Moses redet im Namen des Volkes Gottes. Ihm legt er seine Worte in den Mund. Mit der Gemeinde und für sie bekennt und betet dieser große Gottesmann.

V. 2a: „Herr Gott, du bist unsere Zuflucht für und für.“ A. V. V. 1: „Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.“ — Der Gottesname יְיָ bezeichnet Gott als den Allgewaltigen, den Herrn aller Herren, in dem sich alle Gewalt und Macht

im Himmel und auf Erden konzentriert und der demgemäß die Geschichte und die Geschichte der Völker bestimmt und überwaltet. **וְיָיָהּ**: Thou hast been, du bist gewesen, hast dich so gezeigt und bist es darum noch und wirst es sein. Luther übersetzt dies Perfektum der Erfahrung richtig mit dem Präsens: „Du bist.“ — **מְנוּחָה**: Zuflucht, dwelling place; eigentlich: Wohnort, Heimstätte. Das Wort verbindet den Begriff des Sicherer und Dauerhaften mit dem des Vergenden und Heimatlichen, bezeichnet also eine Stätte, dahin man in Sturm und Wetter fliehen und Sicherheit, Vergung, Ruhe und Frieden finden kann. Wir finden dasselbe Wort Ps. 91, 9: „Der Höchste ist deine Zuflucht.“ — „Für und für“, **בְּדֹר וְדֹר**, in Geschlecht und Geschlecht, von einer Generation zur andern. **וְדֹר** sind eigentlich die Menschen, die gleichzeitig auf der Erde wohnen, also: Menschengeschlecht. Von dieser Bedeutung geht das Wort dann leicht über in die Bedeutung: Zeitperiode, die Zeit, die einem Menschengeschlecht eingeräumt ist. Also allen Geschlechtern zu allen Zeiten, in all generations, ist Gott Zuflucht, die Zuflucht der Seinen.

V. 2b: „Ehe denn die Berge worden und die Erde und die Welt geschaffen worden, bist du, Gott, von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit.“ A. V. V. 2: „Before the mountains were brought forth or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.“ — Der Vers rühmt die Ewigkeit Gottes und dient so zur Erläuterung von V. 1. Gott ist immerdar der Menschen Zuflucht, weil er der Ewige und darum auch der Unveränderliche ist. Als der Schöpfer der Welt war er schon vor der Schöpfung. — Als Kreaturen, von Gott geschaffen, werden zuerst genannt die Berge, weil sie Bild der Dauerhaftigkeit, Festigkeit, Beständigkeit sind und hier ja von der ewigen Dauer und Beständigkeit Gottes die Rede ist. Dann werden unterschieden Erde und Welt. **אֶרֶץ** bezeichnet die Erde als Erdbörper, von dem die Berge ein hervorragender Teil sind. **תֵּבֵל**, Welt, ist nicht das Universum oder Weltall. Der Hebräer, soweit ich ihn kenne, hat kein Wort im Sinne von κόσμος; er sagt dann: Himmel und Erde. **תֵּבֵל** ist vielmehr die Erde, sofern sie zum Wohnplatz der Menschen hergerichtet ist, die bewohnte Erde mit ihrer Menschen-, Tier- und Pflanzenwelt. — Die Schöpfung der Erde wird dargestellt als eine Geburt aus Gott. Die Berge wurden geboren, **וַיֵּלֶד**, were brought forth; und: „du brachtest hervor die Erde und die Welt“. **וַיֵּלֶד** von **לָדַת**, kreissen, das heißt, unter Geburtsschmerzen beben, mit Schmerzen hervorbringen, gebären. Es steht Jes. 45, 10 vom Gebären des Weibes; Job 39, 1 von Tieren; Jes. 51, 2 von der Geburt Israels aus Sarah; und 5 Mos. 32, 18 von der Geburt Israels aus Gott („Gott, der dich geboren hat“). Auch in unserm Vers steht es von Gott: **וַיֵּלֶד**, du kreigest, brachtest aus dir hervor, kraft deines allmächtigen Wortes, Erde und Welt. Luther übersetzt passivisch, indem er der Versart **וַיֵּלֶד** (Passiv) folgt: Erde und Welt wurden geschaffen. — Ehe nun

die Erde mit ihren massiven, imponierenden Bergen ins Dasein trat, war Gott. „Und von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit bist du, Gott.“ Nur Gott hat keinen Anfang und kein Ende. „Bist du, [Komma!] Gott“, hat unsere deutsche Bibel, indem sie „Gott“ als Nominativ, nicht als Prädikat faßt. A. V. nimmt es mit mehreren Auslegern als Prädikat: „Thou art God.“ **לֹא הָיָה** leidet beide Übersetzungen. Da aber hier nicht das Gottsein, sondern das ewige Sein Gottes betont werden soll, so verdient Luthers Übersetzung den Vorzug.

B. 3: „Der du die Menschen lässest sterben und sprichst: Kommt wieder, Menschenkinder.“ A. V.: „Thou turnest man to destruction and sayest, Return, ye children of men.“ — Die hebräischen Imperfekte bezeichnen ein immer wiederkehrendes Tun Gottes. Daher können sie mit Ausdrücken der Gegenwart wiedergegeben werden. — Gott wird angeredet: „Du führest zurück den Menschen zum Staub.“ **אָפִי** ist Zermalmenes, Staub. **אִיִּם** bezeichnet den Menschen nach seiner Ohnmacht, Hinfälligkeit, und steht kollektiv. Der Mensch ist vom Staube genommen und kehrt wieder zum Staub zurück, 1 Mos. 3, 19. Und Gott ist es, der die Menschen wieder dahin führt, wo sie hervorgekommen sind, der sie sterben, zu Staub und Asche werden läßt. — „Und spricht: Kommt wieder, Menschenkinder“, „return“. Eine ganze Anzahl Ausleger, auch Luther, verstehen diese Worte vom Erstehen einer neuen Generation: das eine Geschlecht ruft Gott zurück zum Staub, das andere ruft er an dessen Stelle ins Dasein. Das ist ja ein ganz ansprechender Gedanke, daß Gott zu den einen sagt: Geh! zu den andern: Kommt! Aber die Frage ist, ob der Text eine solche Deutung zuläßt. Für beide Ausdrücke, „sterben“ und „wiederkommen“, steht im Text das Wort **שׁוּב**. Dies Wort heißt: sich wenden, umkehren. Wir finden es wieder B. 13: „Kehre dich wieder zu uns“; „return, O Lord“. Diese Grundbedeutung des Worts läßt sich durch alle Konjugationen hin verfolgen, in denen es vorkommt. Ich habe keine Stelle gefunden, wo es heißen könnte: kommt wieder, im Sinne von: tretet ins Dasein, oder gar: werdet geboren. Im ersten Teil des Verses steht das Hiphil, **שׁוּבָה**: du wendest um, kehrest um, läßt oder machst umkehren, die Menschen zum Staub. Im zweiten Versteil steht das Kal, **שׁוּבָה**: kehrt um, wendet euch zurück. Und es liegt nun kein Grund vor, warum wir in der zweiten Vershälfte von dieser Bedeutung des Worts abgehen sollten, zumal eine andere Bedeutung nicht belegt werden kann. So ist die natürliche, ungezwungene Übersetzung die: „Du läßt die Menschen zum Staub umkehren und sprichst: Kehret um, ihr Menschenkinder.“ — Man wendet hiergegen ein, daß dann in der zweiten Vershälfte dasselbe gesagt wäre wie in der ersten. Aber solche Wiederholung eines Gedankens in etwas veränderter Form war bei den Hebräern Mode. Ihre Poesie bestand im *parallelismus membrorum*. Vergleiche auch in diesem Psalm die Verse 7, 8, 9, 10. — Man hat ferner gesagt, der Ausdruck „Menschenkinder“ weise doch auf solche hin,

die erst geboren werden. Mit größerem Recht aber kann man urgieren, daß zu dem Rufe „Kehret um“, nämlich zum Staub, gerade der Ausdruck **בְּנֵי-אָדָם**, Adamskinder, Erdenkinder, passe. Denn Adam war der erste, der das Urtheil zu hören bekam „Du bist Erde und sollst zu Erde werden“, Mos. 3, 19. — Man sagt auch, schon im zweiten Verse und dann im ganzen Hauptteil des Psalms sei von dem Wechsel der Menschengeschlechter die Rede. Aber der zweite Vers sagt nur, daß Gott in allen Zeiten und Geschlechtern die Zuflucht der Seinen ist, und im übrigen Hauptteil des Psalms ist nur vom Sterben und Vergehen, nicht aber vom Geborenwerden der Menschen die Rede. Es wird daher ein fremdartiger Gedanke in den Text eingetragen, wenn man die zweite Vershälfte vom Erstehen eines neuen Menschengeschlechts versteht. Vielmehr sind beides parallele Aussagen, die im Gegensatz zu Gottes Ewigkeit und Unveränderlichkeit die Sterblichkeit und Vergänglichkeit der Erdenbewohner zum Ausdruck bringen. Und das Sterben der Menschen wird ausdrücklich auf Gott und im zweiten Versteil auf das Allmachtswort Gottes zurückgeführt: „Du machst sie zurückkehren; du rufst ihnen zu: Kehrt zurück!“

V. 4: „Denn tausend Jahre sind vor dir wie der Tag, der gestern vergangen ist, und wie eine Nachtwache.“ A. V.: „For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.“ Die Tatsache, daß Gott es ist, der die Menschen sterben läßt, wird mit der andern Tatsache begründet, daß Gott, weil ewig, auch zeitlos ist. Wäre er das nicht, wäre er selbst der Zeit und damit auch der Vergänglichkeit, der Sterblichkeit, unterworfen, so könnte er nicht ein Geschlecht der Menschen nach dem andern zum Staube zurückrufen. — „Tausend Jahre sind in deinen Augen wie der gestrige Tag, **יוֹם אַחַד**, wenn er im Schwinden ist“, **כִּי יֵבֶר**, **כִּי** ist hier, wie oft, Zeitpartikel: *when it is past*, oder besser: *as it passes*, wenn er, der gestrige Tag, im Schwinden begriffen ist. Gerade diesem Zeitpunkt haftet der Eindruck des Flüchtigen an. So flüchtig sind in Gottes Augen tausend Jahre. — „Und wie eine Wache in der Nacht.“ Wie kurz erscheint die Nacht, wenn wir am Morgen aus dem Schlaf zum Bewußtsein kommen! Eine Wache ist aber nur ein Teil der Nacht. So sind tausend Jahre vor Gott. Auf der andern Seite ist auch das Wort 2 Petr. 3, 8 wahr: „Ein Tag vor dem Herrn ist wie tausend Jahre.“ Gott ist eben als der überweltliche auch der überzeitliche. So kann er tausend Jahre ansehen, als ob sie für ihn gar nicht existierten, kann aber auch an einem Tag, in einem kurzen Zeitpunkt, etwas tun, was für Jahrtausende, ja für die Ewigkeit von entscheidender Bedeutung ist. Wir denken an den Moment der Empfängnis des Sohnes Gottes, an den Augenblick, da Jesus um die neunte Stunde das Haupt neigte und verchied, an den Zeitpunkt, da er sein Leben aus dem Tode nahm. — Dieser ewige, zeitlose Gott ruft eine Generation nach der andern zum Staube zurück. Das ist der große Gegensatz, der hier zum Ausdruck

kommt. Und dieser Gott ist unsere Zuflucht in der Flucht und Vergänglichkeit der Zeit und unsers Lebens. An ihm haben wir eine immer offenstehende Freistadt in der Not der Sünde und des Todes.

W. 5, 6: „Du lässest sie dahinfahren wie einen Strom, und sind wie ein Schlaf, gleichwie ein Gras, das doch bald welk wird, das da frühe blühet und bald welk wird und des Abends abgehauen wird und verdorret.“ A. V.: „Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep; in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth.“ In drei Bildern, vom Strom, vom Schlaf, vom Gras, veranschaulicht Moses die Vergänglichkeit, das Sterben der Menschen. Und wieder macht er Gott zur Ursache des Vergehens der Menschengeschlechter. „Du schwemmst sie hinweg“, **וַיִּסַּח**, läßt sie wie eine Wasserflut hinwegrauschen, Welle auf Welle, Geschlecht auf Geschlecht. Da gibt es kein Aufhalten. — Das Bild wechselt: „Ein Schlaf sind sie.“ Das Imperfektum **יִשָּׁן**, sie werden sein, wird normiert von dem vorhergehenden Perfektum der Erfahrung: du schwemmst sie weg. Es beschreibt wie dieses den jetzigen status quo des menschlichen Lebens. Zwischen diesem Bild vom Schlaf und dem folgenden vom Gras steht im Hebräischen die Zeitbestimmung **בֶּקֶרֶן**, am Morgen. Es fragt sich, ob diese Bestimmung zum Bild vom Schlaf oder zu dem vom Gras gehört. Nach der Akzentuation ist sie zum folgenden zu ziehen: am Morgen sind sie wie Gras, das aufsproßt. Aber da fällt die Stellung am Anfang des Satzes auf, wie auch die englische Übersetzung zeigt: *in the morning they are like grass*. Wir sollten eher erwarten: Sie sind wie Gras, das am Morgen aufblüht. Luther hat es auch zum Bild vom Gras gezogen und mit „bald“ übersetzt. Auch gibt er **יִשָּׁן** mit „welk werden“ anstatt mit „aufsprossen“ wieder: „Gleichwie ein Gras, das doch bald welk wird.“ Vielleicht ist das „am Morgen“ gegen die Akzentuation zum vorhergehenden Bild vom Schlaf zu ziehen: Ein Schlaf sind sie am Morgen; sie sind wie der am Morgen zu Ende gehende Schlaf, wenn nämlich der Mensch erwacht und die Zeit seines Schlafes ihm wie ein kurzer Augenblick vorkommt. Die kritische Anmerkung im hebräischen Text zeigt, daß das erste **בֶּקֶרֶן** Dittographie sein könnte, also zu tilgen wäre. — Das dritte Bild: „wie Gras, das aufsproßt“. **יִשָּׁן**, von Pflanzen gebraucht, heißt, wie auch W. 6: wiederaufleben, aufsprossen. Das Bild wird W. 6 fortgesetzt: „Und am Abend wird es abgeschnitten, cut down. Das ist die Bedeutung von **יִשָּׁן**, oder passiv **יִשָּׁן**, wenn man das Wort als Polel, oder Polal, von **יָרָה**, beschneiden, abschneiden, ableitet. Von **יִשָּׁן** abgeleitet, ist es Poal und heißt verwelken. Das erstere ist wohl vorzuziehen, weil zwischen verwelken und verdorren fast kein Unterschied ist, wohl aber das Verdorren naturgemäß auf das Abschneiden, Abmähen folgt. So sind die Menschen wie ein Gras, das aufsproßt, nur um wieder zu verwelken. Der Mensch wird zur Welt geboren, blüht, entfaltet seine Kräfte, seine Schöne, seine

Gaben, seine Kunst. Aber ehe er es sich versieht, ist es mit ihm zu Ende. Spurgeon: "The history of the grass is: Sown, grown, blown, mown, gone. So man is this day in his bloom, the next in the tomb."

In dem behandelten Abschnitt, V. 1—6, stellt Moses die vergänglichen, sterblichen Menschen dem ewigen, zeitlosen Gott gegenüber, der in der Flucht der Zeit und in Sterbensnot unsere Zuflucht ist.

V. 7: „Das macht dein Zorn, daß wir so vergehen, und dein Grimm, daß wir so plötzlich dahin müssen.“ A. V.: "For we are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath we are troubled." Bisher war im Psalm von den Menschen in der dritten Person die Rede. Jetzt geht der Verfasser in die erste Person über: wir vergehen, wir müssen dahin. „Denn durch deinen Zorn vergehen wir“, וּבְךָ , ganz unser deutsches: wir werden alle. „Und durch deinen Grimm werden wir hinweggeschreckt“, וּבְךָ , von כָּהַל , im Nifal: bestürzt sein, plötzlich hinschwinden, hinweggeschreckt werden. — Das erste Wort für Zorn ist אף und bezeichnet diesen Affekt Gottes als ein gewaltiges Schnauben oder Dreinblasen; das zweite („Grimm“) ist חַמַּד , Zornesglut. — Es wird hier, wie das וְ am Anfang des Satzes zeigt, der tiefere Grund des Todesgeschicks der Menschen aufgedeckt. Das ist Gottes Zorn. Gott zürnt den Menschen. Und dieser sein Zorn bläst, schreckt, brennt sie hinweg, daß sie nicht mehr zu finden sind. Damit ist nicht notwendigerweise ein plötzlicher Tod beschrieben (Luther: plötzlich dahin müssen), wenn auch der Tod meist früher kommt, als die Menschen ihn erwarten; sondern die Ausdrücke schildern drastisch die Flüchtigkeit, Nichtigkeit, Widerstandsunfähigkeit des menschlichen Lebens, die völlige Ohnmacht aller Adamskinder gegen die im Tode waltende Allmacht des zürnenden Gottes.

V. 8: „Denn unsere Missetat stelletst du vor dich, unsere unerkannte Sünde ins Licht vor deinem Angesichte.“ A. V.: "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." Die Ursache des im Sterben der Menschen waltenden Zornes Gottes ist die Sünde, עֲוֹנוֹנֵינוּ , unsere Missetaten, Übertretungen, was wir verkehrt getan, womit wir uns verschuldet haben. סְתֵמֵינוּ , unsere geheimen Dinge, Partizip Passiv Kal von סָתַם , verborgen sein, also was verborgen ist, unsere verborgenen Dinge. Ps. 44, 22 ist die Rede von $\text{חַיְתֵינוּ הַסְתֵּמָה}$, den verborgenen Sachen des Herzens; Luther: der Grund des Herzens. So redet auch Ps. 19, 13 von verborgenen Fehlern und nennt sie $\text{חַיְתֵינוּ הַסְתֵּמָה}$, versteckte Dinge. Es sind damit nicht solche Sünden gemeint, die der Mensch zwar erkennt, aber zu verheimlichen sucht, sondern die Tiefe des menschlichen Verderbens, die bodenlose Verderbnis des menschlichen Herzens, in die der Mensch nicht hinunterfieht, die sich seiner vollen Erkenntnis entzieht. Die Sünde ist etwas viel Größeres, viel tiefer Sitzendes, als der Mensch sieht, denkt und erkennt. Aber was dem Menschen verborgen ist, das sieht Gott. Er sieht das absichtlich, will es sehen: „Du setzt unsere Missetaten vor dich hin, unser Verbor-

genes in das Licht deines Angesichts.“ Gottes Angesicht ist „Gott in seiner Zuteilung zur Welt“, die den Menschen zugekehrte Seite Gottes im Gegensatz zu dem uns verborgenen Gott. **אור** ist hier der Lichtkreis, den ein Licht um sich her verbreitet. In den Lichtkreis seines Angesichts (Luther richtig: das Licht vor deinem Angesicht) stellt Gott unsere Sünden hinein, auch die geheime, vor unsern und anderer Augen verborgene Bosheit unsers Herzens. Er nimmt Notiz von der Sünde, rückt sie vor seine Augen, läßt die Strahlen des Lichts seiner Allwissenheit und Heiligkeit darauf fallen. So heißt Gott Hiob 7, 20: **נִצֵּר הָאֵדָם**, Beobachter der Menschen; und Hiob 14, 16. 17 wird von ihm gesagt, daß er die Gänge, die Schritte, der Menschen zählt und daß er ihre Sünden in ein Bündlein versiegelt, um sie zu seiner Zeit heimzuzählen. — Was nun Gott im Lichte seines Angesichts sieht, die offenbare und geheime Bosheit der Menschen, ist ihm nicht gleichgültig, sondern es affiziert ihn, reizt ihn zum Zorn. Und die Folge seines Zorns ist, daß er den Menschen den Tod zum Ziel setzt und so ihr Leben zu einem dahinsiehenden Strom macht, zum schnell vergangenen Schlaf, zum verdorrten Gras. So herrscht der Tod infolge der Sünde und im Tode der Zorn Gottes.

B. 9: „Darum fahren alle unsere Tage dahin durch deinen Zorn; wir bringen unsere Jahre zu wie ein Geschwäh.“ A. V.: „For all our days are passed away in Thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told“ (margin: „as a meditation“). — „Denn alle unsere Tage machen sich davon in deinem [durch deinen] Zorn; wir verbringen unsere Jahre wie ein Gemurmelt.“ Das **וְ** am Anfang des Satzes steht nicht begründend, sondern entweder affirmativ: gewiß, es ist dein Zorn, daß unsere Tage so dahinschwinden; oder konsekutiv: so daß unsere Tage in deinem Zorn vergehen. Der Zusammenhang mit dem vorhergehenden Vers ist also: Du siehst der Menschen Sünde an, und darum ist es gewiß so, oder: Daher kommt es, daß wir durch deinen Zorn vergehen, wie B. 7 gesagt war. Der Vers ist also eine Parallele zu B. 7, enthält ähnliche Gedanken, nämlich, daß Gottes Zorn die Ursache des Sterbens der Menschen ist, nur daß hier, worauf auch Luther aufmerksam macht, noch verächtlicher als bisher vom menschlichen Leben geredet wird. Unsere Tage machen sich davon, **פָּנֵי**, wenden sich von uns ab, kehren uns verächtlich den Rücken zu. Luther: „Unser Leben kehrt uns nicht das Angesicht zu, als ob es komme, sondern den Rücken, da es in schnellem Laufe flieht.“ Und daß unsere Erdentage uns eine solche verächtliche Behandlung zuteil werden lassen, sich einer nach dem andern auf- und davonmachen, anstatt bei uns zu verweilen und mit uns zu gehen, das hat seinen Grund in Gottes Zorn. **עֲבָרָה**, das dritte Wort für „Zorn“ in diesem Psalm, beschreibt den Zorn als etwas überwallendes, ein Herausbrechen, Hervorfließen dessen, was im Herzen ist und sich nicht mehr zurückhalten läßt. Die drei für „Zorn“ gebrauchten Ausdrücke zeigen klar, daß Gottes Zorn nicht etwas bloß

Passives, sondern stark Aktives ist, ein Zorn, der sich im Strafen, oft in entsehligen Strafgerichten, und so auch in der Todesherrschaft äußert. — Wie die Tage unsers Lebens, so sind auch unsere Lebensjahre, die sich ja aus Tagen zusammensetzen. Die „bringen wir zu Ende“, *בְּיָמֵינוּ*, von *יָמָה*, fertig, zu Ende, alle sein; *כְּמוֹ-הֵנָּה*, „wie ein Gemurmel“, wie wenn einer bei sich selbst über etwas nachdenkt (*הִנָּה* meditieren) und darüber zu sich selbst redet. Er murmelt etwas vor sich hin, das andere nicht verstehen können. So ist *הִנָּה*, wie D. Stöckhardt bemerkt, so eine Art Mittel Ding zwischen Denken und Reden, mehr als bloßes Nachdenken, aber weniger als verständiges Reden. — So eitel, nichtig ist das menschliche Leben. Daher auch die Vergleiche des Menschenlebens in der Schrift mit Wind, der dahintweht; mit Dampf, der verfliegt; mit Rauch, der emporwirbelt und sich dann in der Luft verliert; mit einem Schatten, der sich nicht greifen noch halten läßt.

V. 10: „Unser Leben währet siebzig Jahre, und wenn's hoch kommt, so sind's achtzig Jahre, und wenn's köstlich gewesen ist, so ist's Mühe und Arbeit gewesen; denn es fährt schnell dahin, als flögen wir davon.“ A. V.: „The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.“ — „Die Tage unserer Jahre“ — dieser Ausdruck steht absolut, unverbunden, am Anfang des Verses. Es ist ein bezeichnender Ausdruck für unsere Lebenszeit, die sich aus Jahren, und diese wieder aus schnell vergehenden Tagen, zusammensetzt — wieder ein Hinweis auf des menschlichen Lebens Vergänglichkeit. „Darin sind siebzig Jahre.“ Das *בְּ* im *בְּיָמֵינוּ*, in ihnen, den Tagen unserer Jahre, ist das *בְּ* essentiae, das anzeigt, worin etwas besteht, woraus es sich zusammensetzt, was seine Summe ausmacht. Die Summe unserer Lebenszeit, worauf sich die Tage unserer Jahre belaufen, sind siebzig Jahre. Moses will hiermit nicht eine gewisse Altersgrenze des menschlichen Lebens fixieren, sondern nur sagen, daß, wenn einer nicht vorzeitig stirbt, sondern sein Leben ganz durchlebt (menschlich geredet), dann erreicht er etwa ein Alter von siebzig Jahren. — „Und wenn's hoch kommt“ (so übersetzt Luther), „so sind's achtzig Jahre.“ *וְאִם בְּכִבְרֹתָו*, „if by reason of strength“. *בְּכִבְרֹתָו* heißt Stärke, Kraft, Macht. Wenn also das menschliche Leben in seiner Kraft verläuft, seine Kraftfülle sich voll entfalten kann, der Mensch bei Kräften bleibt, eine gesunde, kernige Natur hat, von schwächenden, entkräftenden, entnervenden Krankheiten und folgenschweren Unglücksfällen verschont bleibt, dann kann er's auf achtzig Jahre bringen. Das ist die Regel. An Ausnahmen fehlt es nicht. Viele erreichen dies Alter nicht, etliche überschreiten es. Moses selbst wurde 120 und sein Bruder Aaron 123 Jahre alt. — Wenn die englische Bibel übersetzt: „If by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength“, so zieht sie den Hebräischen Nachsatz „So sind's

achtzig Jahre“, in den Vorderatz hinein und verdunkelt damit den Sinn. Der Grundtext sagt, daß, wenn der Mensch besonders gesund und kräftig ist, er sein Leben auf achtzig Jahre bringen könne. — „Und wenn's köstlich gewesen ist“, וְרִיחָם: und ihr Prunk, der Prunk, Stolz der menschlichen Lebenszeit. רִיחַ ist eigentlich Rumor; dann das, womit einer rumort, Lärm macht, womit er prahlt, großtut. Gemeint ist alles im menschlichen Leben, worauf der Mensch sich etwas zugute tut, womit er einherstolzisiert, Aufsehen erregen, Anerkennung finden will, wie Reichtum, Macht, Ansehen, Ehre, Schönheit, Begabung, Kunst, Lebensgenuß, Wohlleben und dergleichen. Was ist das, bei Lichte besehen? „Mühe und Arbeit“, „labor and sorrow“, מְאֹד וְעָמָל. עָמָל, griechisch πόνος, vereinigt in sich die Begriffe von Arbeit und Mühe, Arbeit, die mit Mühe verbunden ist, mühevollen Arbeit, Pflanze. מְאֹד ist Nichtigkeit, Eitelkeit, Gestaltlosigkeit. Das ist das menschliche Leben gerade in den Dingen, deren der Mensch sich gerne rühmt. Es kostet ihn Mühe und Arbeit, das nach seiner Meinung Köstliche, Begehrtenwerte, zu erlangen. Und wenn er's hat, so hört damit die Mühe und Plage nicht auf, wie der Mensch sich wohl vorgestellt hatte, sondern der Genuß wird ihm durch Kummer, Sorge, Herzeleid, Neid, Eifersucht und dergleichen getrübt. Er findet bittere Speisen in dem Kelch seiner Lust. So findet es sich, daß nicht nur das Leben selbst, sondern auch das Beste, was es bietet an irdischen Gütern, Freuden und Genüssen, Plage, Nichtigkeit, Eitelkeit ist, ohne wirklichen inneren Wert und Gehalt, leicht wie die Spreu, die der Wind verweht. „Was sind dieses Lebens Güter? Eine Hand voller Sand, Kummer der Gemüter.“ — Man hat Moses wegen dieser Schilderung des menschlichen Lebens eines unberechtigten Pessimismus beschuldigt. Aber wer recht hineinschaut in das Tun und Treiben der Menschen und das, womit sie so prunken und prahlen, bei Lichte beseht, der weiß, daß Moses den eiteln Tand der Welt wahrheitsgetreu schildert. Von dem Wert des menschlichen Lebens als Gnadenzeit zur Gewinnung des wahren, ewigen Lebens sieht er in diesem Zusammenhang ab. — „Denn es fährt schnell dahin.“ נָא = vorübergehen, verschwinden. וְיָחַד ist adverbialer Infinitiv von וָחַד, eilends. — „Und wir fliegen davon.“ 1 consecutivum mit Imperfectum drückt die Folge aus: so daß wir dabonsliegen. Das ist das letzte Bild des menschlichen Lebens in diesem Psalm. Unser Leben ist gleich dem Flug eines aufgeschreckten Vogels. Es ist ein Hinwegeilen, ein Entfliehen hinweg von unserer irdischen Wohnstätte. In dieser Flüchtigkeit des menschlichen Lebens ist es begründet, 2, daß selbst das, was den Menschen am begehrenswertesten scheint, eitel, wertlos ist.

B. 11: „Wer glaubt es aber, daß du so sehr zürnest? Und wer fürchtet sich vor solchem deinem Grimm?“ A. V.: „Who knoweth the power of Thine anger? Even according to Thy fear, so is Thy wrath.“ — „Wer erkennt die Stärke deines Zorns und deinen Grimm, wie es der Furcht vor dir entspricht?“ Es ist doch gewiß ein

starker, heftiger Zorn Gottes, der sich in dem Elend und der Nichtigkeit des menschlichen Lebens und in dem unaufhörlichen Sterben der Menschen beweist. Das sollten die Menschen, die unter diesem Gotteszorn liegen, erkennen und einsehen und sollten damit ihre Furcht vor Gott zu erkennen geben. Der englischen Übersetzung kann man nur schwer einen rechten Sinn abgewinnen. **יִרְאָה** heißt „gemäß deiner Furcht“; der Furcht entsprechend, die dir gebührt; wie es die dir gebührende Furcht erfordert. Würden die Menschen Gott so fürchten, wie sie sollen, so würden sie auch den Zorn Gottes recht erkennen, der sich in dem beständigen Sterben der Menschen offenbart. Aber wer tut das? So gut wie niemand. Die Welt fürchtet Gott nicht. Darum ist ihr auch sein Zorn, überhaupt seine Heiligkeit und Gerechtigkeit, ein verächtlich Ding. Sie zieht es vor, von Weltverbrüderung unter einer allgemeinen, durch die Finger sehenden Vaterschaft Gottes zu fasn und mit dem großen Meister der Töne Ludwig von Beethoven am Schluß seiner großartigen „Neunten Symphonie“ zu singen: „Freude! Freude! Diesen Ruf der ganzen Welt! Droben überm Sternenzelt muß ein lieber Vater wohnen!“ So tief ist das sündliche Verderben der Menschheit, daß sie den gewaltigen Zorn Gottes nicht erkennt, nicht glaubt. Sie hat den Tod vor Augen, erfährt täglich das Elend, die Vergänglichkeit des Lebens, weiß aber nicht oder will nicht wissen, was es mit dem Tode auf sich hat, was das zu bedeuten hat, daß täglich Tausende das Land der Lebendigen verlassen und in die Erde verscharrt werden müssen. — Doch etliche erkennen die Ursache dieser grauenhaften Todesherrschaft, sind sich des Zornes Gottes bewußt, von dem das Sterben der Menschen herrührt und bitten mit unserm Psalm:

B. 12: „Lehre uns bedenken, daß wir sterben müssen, auf daß wir klug werden.“ A. V.: „So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.“ — „Zu zählen unsere Tage, so“ oder „das“, **יִדְעוּ**, „lehre uns.“ Die Tage zählen ist so viel wie es zu Herzen nehmen, daß die Tage gezählt sind, das Leben ein Ziel hat, und demgemäß das Leben einrichten; Luther: „daß die Menschen in Wahrheit nachdenken über ihr Leben, wie elend und jammervoll es sei“. „Er wünscht, daß wir alle solche Rechner werden, damit wir uns nicht Tage ohne Zahl erdichten.“ Bedenken wir recht die Nichtigkeit und Flüchtigkeit unsers Lebens, so werden wir davonbringen (**יִנְיָ** Hilff von **יְיָ**) ein weises Herz. Die rechte Lebensweisheit, Lebensklugheit zeigt sich darin, daß wir die einzelnen Tage, aus denen sich unser Leben zusammensetzt, recht ausnützen, selbstverständlich zu unserm ewigen Heil. Denn: „Alles andre, wie's auch scheine, Ist ja nur ein schlimeres Joch, Darunter das Herze sich naget und plaget Und dennoch kein wahres Vergnügen erjaget.“ — Die rechte Weisheit aber kann nur Gott geben, und er will darum gebeten sein.

B. 13: „Herr, lehre dich doch wieder zu uns und sei deinen Knechten gnädig.“ A. V.: „Return, O Lord; how long? And let it

repent Thee concerning Thy servants." — Es beginnt der letzte Abschnitt des Psalms. Jetzt gebraucht Moses den Gottesnamen Jehovah. Das ist der Name des Bundesgottes, der Treue hält ewiglich. Es bricht nun im Psalm die Sonne durch die dunklen Wolken. — **שׁוּבָה יְיָ:** Wende dich, Herr; kehre um. **עַד-מָתַי:** Bis wie lange? Wie lange willst du noch zürnen? Wie lange soll es noch dauern, bis du deinen Zorn wendest? Luther drückt diese kurze Frage in dem einen Wort „doch“ aus: „Kehre dich doch wieder zu uns“; es ist Zeit, daß du deinen Zorn fahren lässest. Luther: „Der Sinn ist leicht: du hast uns mit Jammer niedergedrückt; du hast diese erste Weisheit gegeben, daß wir den Zorn Gottes erkannt haben. Nun, lieber Gott, du hast genug getödet, genug niedergedrückt, genug gedemüthigt; nun lehre dich doch endlich und sei uns gnädig; zeige uns auch, wie gütig und gnädig du bist, damit wir etwas haben, womit wir in diesem Schrecken unser Herz trösten können.“ — „Laß dir's Leid sein über deine Knechte.“ **חַנּוּן,** laß dich's gereuen, von Gott gebraucht, ist menschliche Vorstellung von Gott. Er soll sich das Leid, das er seinen Knechten getan hat, gereuen lassen, soll Erbarmen haben mit denen, die ihn erzürnt haben. Das bittet Moses für Gottes Knechte, Gottes Volk, in das er sich mit einschließt.

W. 14: „Fülle uns frühe mit deiner Gnade; so wollen wir rühmen und fröhlich sein unser Lebenlang.“ **A. V.:** „O satisfy us early with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.“ — „Sättige uns mit deiner Gnade.“ Unter dem Gefühl des göttlichen Zorns ist Gottes Volk gnadenhungrig geworden, wie das ja der Zweck jeder Züchtigung in Gottes Hand ist. — **בֶּבֶר:** am Morgen, frühe, bald. Gott möge ihnen bald, alsbald, seine Gnade, **חֶסֶד,** Freundlichkeit, Gunst, Guld, die alle Sünden zudeckt, wieder zuwenden, die Herzen mit dem Trost seiner göttlichen Vergebung erfüllen. Die Nacht der Trübsal hat lange genug gedauert. Es ist Zeit, daß die Gnadensonne über ihnen auf-gehe. — „Und so wollen wir frohlocken und uns freuen alle unsere Tage.“ Wenn wir auch des Lebens Mühe und Plage noch erfahren und der Tod uns schließlich hinwegnimmt, so lassen wir uns doch an deiner Gnade genügen. Die ist und bleibt unsers Herzens höchste Freude bis ans Ende.

W. 15: „Erfreue uns nun wieder, nach dem du uns so lange plagest, nach dem wir so lange Unglück leiden.“ **A. V.:** „Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.“ — „Erfreue uns gemäß den Tagen, da du uns drücktest, den Jahren, da wir Böses sahen.“ Moses gedenkt hier des besonderen Leids, das sein Volk in der Wüste erfahren hat, daß das alte Geschlecht hinsterven mußte. Nach diesen Tagen der Heim-suchung soll Gott sein Volk wieder erfreuen. Diese Bitte hat Gott auch erhört, hat sein Volk nicht ganz verstoßen, sondern ein neues Geschlecht aufkommen lassen, das im Lande Kanaan zur Ruhe kam. — Die Bitte

Moses geht dahin, daß Gott „gemäß den Tagen“, כִּימֹת, und den Jahren der Bedrückung sie erfreue. Man legt wohl zu viel in diese Worte, wenn man sie sagen läßt, daß Gott so viele Freudenjahre geben möge, wie es Leidensjahre waren: „Proportion our time of joy to our time of sorrow. The one has lasted many long years; so let the others.“ Auch Luther drückt diesen Gedanken nicht aus. Die Bitte will wohl einfach dies besagen: Wie es Gott gefallen hat, sie zu schlagen, so möge es ihm nun gefallen, sie zu heilen; wie er sie unter der Plage hat seufzen lassen, so möge er unter seiner Gnade ihr Herz froh machen.

V. 16: „Zeige deinen Knechten deine Werke und deine Ehre ihren Kindern.“ A. V.: „Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children.“ — „Es zeige sich“, יֵרָאָה, werde gesehen, werde offenbar, „deinen Knechten dein Werk“, dein Tun, פְּעֻלָּתְךָ; „und deine Ehre“, הִרְרָךְ, deine Herrlichkeit, „über ihren Kindern“, nämlich: werde sie offenbar. Vermöge des Parallelismus ist Gottes Werk und seine Ehre eins und dasselbe: Gottes herrliches Tun, nämlich sein Heilswerk, das er unter und an den Menschenkindern tut und das die Erwählung, Führung und Erhaltung Israels als des vorbildlichen Heilsvolkes in sich schloß. Dies Werk besteht darin, daß Gott sich aus der verlorenen Welt ein Volk sammelt, das ihm zugehört, zu dem er sich in Gnaden kehrt, an dem er sich verherrlicht als der Gott, der seinen Zorn gegen sie fahren läßt und vergibt Missetat, Übertretung und Sünde. Das setzt die Erlösung durch Christum voraus, wie Gott ja auch nur um Christi willen unsere Zuflucht ist. Dieses Heilswerk Gottes — dahin geht Moses Bitte — möge sich fortsetzen an den Kindern, von Geschlecht zu Geschlecht.

V. 17: „Und der Herr, unser Gott, sei uns freundlich und fördere das Werk unserer Hände bei uns; ja, das Werk unserer Hände wolle er fördern.“ A. V.: „And let the beauty of the Lord, our God, be upon us, and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish Thou it.“ — „Und es sei die Freundlichkeit“, נֶחֱם, Lieblichkeit, huld- und gunstvolle Gefinnung, „des Herrn, unsers Gottes, über uns.“ Gott möge seinem Volk hold, freundlich, gewogen sein, möge ihm wieder gut sein, nachdem er ihm gezürnt hat. Und diese Freundlichkeit Gottes möge ihr Werk „fördern“, כּוֹנֵנָה, es festigen, ihnen Lust und Kraft zu diesem Werk verleihen und seinen Segen dazu geben. Das erbittet Moses als einen besonderen Erweis der Huld und Freundlichkeit Gottes gegen sein Volk. — Im vorhergehenden Verse war von Gottes Tun die Rede, hier von unserm Werk. Wir nehmen Teil an Gottes Werk. Gott führt sein Heilswerk aus durch uns, seine Knechte, seine Mitarbeiter. Denen hat er dies Werk aufgetragen; ihre Aufgabe ist es, das „Werk des Herrn“ zu treiben. Und wenn Gott unser Werk fördert, das wir in seinem Namen tun, dann fördert er sein Werk. Darum erhört er auch gern die Bitte der Seinen, daß sein Werk gefördert werde, daß es bei ihnen, unter

ihnen gefestigt werde, daß sie es mehr und mehr als sein Werk erkennen, immer fester, treuer, eifriger werden in der Erfüllung ihrer hohen Aufgabe, immer mehr zunehmen im Werk des Herrn, 1 Kor. 15, 58. — Diese Bitte wird zum Schluß wiederholt, aber in anderer Form: „Und das Werk unserer Hände — fördere du es!“ כוננה. Dieser absolut stehende Imperativ, diese direkte, dringende, kühne Anrede an Gott, bildet einen treffenden und im Hebräischen besonders volltönenden Abschluß des Psalms. Der Gott, der unsere Zuflucht ist, wird gewiß auch diese Bitte nicht unerhört lassen, wird das Werk seiner Knechte fördern, wenn sie das Ihre tun, daß der Herr ihre und ihrer Kinder Zuflucht bleibe und auch die Zuflucht derer werde, die noch ohne Gott und ohne Hoffnung sind in diesem armen, nichtigen, vergänglichen Leben.

Zum Lehrinhalt des Psalms

Der Psalm wird als ein Gebet bezeichnet. In den ersten vier Versen gibt der heilige Schreiber den Grund der Zuerflucht an, die er zu Gott hat und die ihn zum Gebet ermutigt: Gott ist immerdar die Zuflucht der Seinen, denn er ist der Ewige, der schon vor Grundlegung der Welt war; der Allmächtige, der diese Erde geschaffen hat; der Zeitlose, vor dem tausend Jahre sind wie ein Tag. Die Menschen dagegen sterben dahin, sind ohnmächtig gegen den Tod, müssen, wenn Gott sie ruft, zu ihrem Staub zurückkehren. In dieser ihrer Sterblichkeit will Gott ihre Zuflucht sein und ist es auch. In ihm finden wir einen sicheren Vergungsort in unserer Lebens- und Sterbensnot.

In B. 5—11, dem Hauptteil des Psalms, beschreibt Moses die Not, die ihn zum Gebet treibt. Das ist die Nichtigkeit, Eitelkeit, Vergänglichkeit des menschlichen Lebens, die ihm gerade auch in dem großen Wüstensterben seines Volks vor Augen trat. Unter den Bildern vom unaufhaltfam dahinflutenden Strom, vom betwußtlosen Schlaf, vom aufblühenden und wieder verweltenden Gras, vom halbblauten Gemurmel der Lippen, vom schnellen Flug des aufgeschreckten Vogels, schildert er die Hinfälligkeit des Menschen. Und diese Todesherrschaft führt er zurück auf Gottes Zorn und diesen auf der Menschen Sünde. Gott stellt die Sünde der Menschen ins Licht vor seinem Angesicht; sie reizt den heiligen Gott zum Zorn. Und sein Zorn äußert sich darin, daß er die Menschen sterben läßt. Der Tod ist also nicht das natürliche, den Menschen von Anfang an von Gott zuge dachte Geschick, sondern ist erst infolge der Sünde in die Welt gekommen. Er ist die Ausführung des über die Sünder ausgesprochenen göttlichen Strafurteils „Du sollst des Todes sterben“. Die Menschen haben durch ihren Ungehorsam Gott genötigt, das Glück ihres Lebens in Jammer und Herzeleid zu verkehren. Der Tod ist ein „Gewaltakt“ Gottes, und zwar ein Strafakt. Gott greift da mit seiner starken Hand ins menschliche Leben ein und setzt ihm ein Ziel. Das Sterben der Menschen wird durchweg in diesem

Psalm auf Gott, auf den über der Menschen Sünde erzürnten Gott, zurückgeführt.

Der dritte Teil, V. 12—17, gibt dann den Inhalt des Gebets, den wir bereits näher dargelegt haben.

Es ist die Frage gestellt worden, ob das, was Moses in diesem Psalm vom Sterben der Menschen, besonders von ihrem Sterben infolge des Zornes Gottes, sagt, von allen Menschen ohne Unterschied gelte oder ob es nur Bezug habe auf das Dahinsterben des alten Geschlechts Israels in der Wüste. Diese Frage ist dahin beantwortet worden, daß Moses nur das in der Wüste verstorbene Geschlecht im Sinn gehabt habe, als er schrieb: „Das macht dein Zorn, daß wir so vergehen“ usw. Man dürfe daher diese Aussage nicht auf das Sterben aller Menschen beziehen, am allerwenigsten auf das Sterben der Kinder Gottes, denn die seien nicht mehr unter dem Zorn, sondern unter der Gnade.

Dieser Ansicht gegenüber ist folgendes zu bedenken:

1. Wenn Moses in diesem Psalm, wo er das Sterben der Menschen auf ihre Sünde und Gottes Zorn zurückführt, nur von dem sündigen Geschlecht Israels rebete, daß ihr Tod in der Wüste eine Folge des Zornes Gottes über ihre Sünde gewesen sei, dann würde folgen, daß jenes ganze Geschlecht unter dem Zorn Gottes, also in seinen Sünden, gestorben und verlorengegangen ist. Gab es aber, wie doch ohne Zweifel anzunehmen ist, unter jenem Geschlecht auch bußfertige, gläubige Kinder Gottes, die von dem Strafurteil mitbetroffen wurden, weil sie eben zu dem alten Geschlecht gehörten, und schließt Moses auch diese mit ein, wenn er sagt: „Das macht dein Zorn“ usw., dann folgt daraus, daß der Tod auch für die Kinder Gottes eine Strafe des über ihre Sünde zürnenden Gottes ist.

2. Moses redet zuerst vom Sterben der Menschen im allgemeinen, nicht von einer bestimmten Klasse von Menschen. Er redet da in der dritten Person. V. 3: „der du die Menschen lässest sterben“; V. 5: „Du lässest sie dahinfahren“, usw. Da haben wir eine Beschreibung des menschlichen Lebens, die auf alle paßt, wie ja auch der Ausdruck Menschenkinder, V. 3, andeutet. Dann geht Moses in die erste Person über, aber nicht, um nun etwas vom Sterben zu sagen, das seine Anwendung nicht auf alle Menschen fände, sondern nur auf das Sterben einer gewissen Klasse, wie jenes israelitischen Geschlechts, das zum Tode in der Wüste verurteilt war. Vielmehr will er das, was allgemein vom Sterben der Menschen gilt, nun auf sich und sein Volk anwenden. So finden wir denn auch, daß Moses in diesem Teil wesentlich nichts anderes vom Sterben seines Volkes sagt, als was er schon vom Sterben der Menschen im allgemeinen gesagt hat: wir vergehen, wir müssen dahin, unser Leben kommt höchstens auf achtzig Jahre, es fährt schnell dahin, als flögen wir davon. Ganz ähnlich hatte er die Vergänglichkeit des menschlichen Lebens schon im ersten Teil beschrieben. Auch was er von der Sünde seines Volkes sagt, daß Gott sie ins Licht vor seinem

Angefichte stellt, ist nicht etwas Besonderes, das Gott nur mit der Sünde jenes Geschlechts getan hätte, sondern er tut das mit aller Menschen Sünde. Auch von uns allen gilt, daß Gott unsere Missetat vor sich stellt, die innere Bosheit unsers Herzens bei Lichte besieht und dann das Urtheil über uns fällt: Du bist des Todes schuldig. — Zugleich wollte Moses seinem Volk und uns allen die rechte Belehrung über die Ursache des Todes geben, damit sie und wir diese Ursache recht erkennen und bedenken und uns vor Gottes Zorn fürchten lernen möchten. Die Menschen im allgemeinen tun das eben nicht, glauben nicht, daß Gott so sehr über die Sünde zürnt, fürchten sich nicht vor Gott und darum auch nicht vor seinem Zorn, V. 11; verachten und verspotten vielmehr den heftigen Zorn Gottes, der sich gerade auch in dem täglichen Wegsterben der Menschen offenbart. Und hier schließt sich Moses selbst mit ein: Wir vergehen durch deinen Zorn, V. 7; unsere Missetaten stellst du vor dich, V. 8. Moses gehörte auch zu denen, die außerhalb des verheißenen Landes sterben mußten, weil auch er sich des Unglaubens seines Volkes schuldig gemacht hatte. Und doch wissen wir, daß er ein seliges Ende gehabt hat. Aber er meint sich selbst mit, wenn er sagt: Wir fahren dahin durch deinen Zorn. Und wie sein Tod, obwohl ein seliger, doch ein Tod infolge des göttlichen Zorns über seine Sünde war, so war es auch der Tod aller derer im alten Geschlecht, die bußfertig, in der Erkenntnis ihrer Sünde und des wohlverdienten Zornes Gottes, ihre Zuflucht zu Gott nahmen und so in der Wüste vergingen.

3. Moses redet in diesem Psalm nicht im Namen der Ungläubigen unter seinem Volk, sondern im Namen der Gemeinde Gottes, derer, die mit ihm bekennen: „Herr Gott, du bist unsere Zuflucht für und für“, die mit ihm am Schluß des Psalms um Abwendung des Zorns und Zuwendung der Gnade bitten, die an Gottes Werk Gefallen finden, Gottes Werk tun und denen die Förderung dieses Werks am Herzen liegt. Diese alle wissen und bekennen, daß das Elend und die Vergänglichkeit ihres Lebens und ihr schließlicher Tod eine Folge des über ihre Sünde erzürnten Gottes ist.

4. Moses fährt fort, auch wo er das Sterben auf sein Volk anwendet und es als Folge des Zornes Gottes hinstellt, in Perfekten zu reden wie vorher. Die Ausleger, die diesen Teil des Psalms nur von dem in der Wüste vergangenen Geschlecht verstehen, übersetzen daher diese Perfekte mit der Vergangenheit: „Das macht dein Zorn, daß wir so vergangen sind, so plötzlich dahinnuhten.“ Aber es sind dogmatische Gründe, die sie dazu veranlassen. Die Perfekte sind auch hier die Perfekte der Erfahrung und sind darum, wie Luther und die englische Bibel es auch tun, mit dem Präsens wiederzugeben.

5. V. 13 bittet Moses Gott im Namen seines Volks, er wolle sich doch von seinem Zorn kehren und seinen Knechten wieder gnädig sein. Diese Bitte geht doch nicht dahin, daß Gott aufhören wolle, das

alte Geschlecht in der Wüste sterben zu lassen; denn an diesem Strafgericht Gottes war nichts zu ändern. Es ist vielmehr eine Bitte um Gnade und Vergebung, wie sie gerade bei der Betrachtung des Zornes Gottes über die Sünde seines Volks, des ganzen Volks, sich in ihnen regte.

6. Die Klage Moses über den Unglauben der Menschen, die den Zorn Gottes nicht gelten lassen wollen und sich davor nicht fürchten, sollte uns eine Warnung sein, daß wir uns nicht auch dieses Unglaubens schuldig machen, indem wir meinen, unser Tod sei nicht eine Strafe für unsere Sünde. Moses war anderer Meinung. Er starb auf Gottes Befehl außerhalb der Grenze des Gelobten Landes. Das war, wie er bekennt, zugleich Strafe für seine Sünde. Und doch hatte er einen seligen Tod, denn er hatte über seine Sünde Buße getan.

7. Die Gnade hebt nicht alle Folgen der Sünde auf, wie das Elend und den Jammer des Lebens und den Tod. Auch Kinder Gottes bekommen noch den Jammer des Lebens und die Bitterkeit des Todes zu schmecken. Die Gnade nimmt den Tod nicht aus der Welt. Und im Tode an sich liegt Gottes Zorn. Der Tod an sich ist und bleibt Gottes Strafgericht über die Menschen. Wer aber in der Not seiner Sünde und des Zornes Gottes seine Zuflucht zu Gott nimmt, der findet in ihm Gnade und Erbarmen und hat die Gewißheit, daß Gott trotz seines Zorns im Grunde ihm doch gewogen ist, daß er einen gnädigen Gott hat, auch wenn er den Tod, die Strafe der Sünde, an sich erfährt.

Wir können also den Inhalt dieses Teils des Psalms in die Worte einfleiden: Die gläubigen Kinder Gottes erkennen, daß der Tod in der Sünde und im Zorn Gottes seine Ursache hat, fürchten Gott, verlassen sich auf seine Gnade und bitten ihn um die rechte Lebensweisheit.

Zitate zur Bestätigung dieser Auffassung:

Luther: „Du siehst, Gott, unsern Jammer und Unglück, welches wir selbst nicht sehen. Wir sind vor deinem Angesicht unrein und außersündlichste besetzt; es ist aber solche Mißgestalt und Schande unserer verderbten Natur uns selbst verborgen. Deshalb, auf daß sie möge offenbart und gereinigt werden, so gebraucht Gott dazu solche gewaltige, bittere Arznei. . . . Hierher gehören nun die Strafen und das Unglück, so auf dem Menschengeschlecht liegen, als Pestilenz, Krieg und teure Zeit, auf daß damit die Sünde an uns gestraft und offenbart werde, daß man es greifen möge, bis wir es verstehen lernen, was wir vor Gottes Augen sind.“ (Zu Ps. 90, 8 in der Auslegung der Genesis.)

D. G. Stöckhardt: „Im Tode zeigt sich die gewaltige Hand Gottes, der über die Menschen zürnt. Der Tod ist ein Zorngericht Gottes. Es ist ein großer Zorn, der über der Menschheit waltet, daß sie alle so elendiglich umkommen. . . . Moses schließt sich mit Gottes Volk zusammen. Auch die Gemeinde Gottes erfährt dieses schreckliche Gericht

Gottes. Ja die Gemeinde allein erkennt das recht. Die andern verstehen nicht die Bedeutung des Todes. . . . Gäbe es keine Sünde in der Welt, so auch keinen Tod. Aber nun hat alles Fleisch seinen Weg verderbt. Darum herrscht der Tod und im Tode Gottes Zorn. . . . Es ist der Welt verborgen, daß die Sünde der Menschen etwas so Furchtbares ist, daß sie den Tod bringt. Die Gemeinde erkennt ihre Schuld und beugt sich unter das verdiente Zornesgeschick. Der Tod wirft seine Schatten auch auf unser Leben zurück. Das ganze Erdenleben ist ein Leben des Todes, eitel. Auch das kommt vom Zorn Gottes. Durch Gottes Zorn schwinden unsere Tage so dahin, ist unser Leben so eitel und nichtig.“ (Aus der Nachschrift seiner Vorlesung über diesen Psalm.)

D. F. Pieper: „Die Schrift Alten und Neuen Testaments kennt keine andere Todesursache als die Sünde des Menschen. Wenn es 1 Mos. 2, 17 in der Warnung Gottes heißt: ‚Welches Tages du davon issest, wirst du des Todes sterben‘, und nach dem Sündenfall 1 Mos. 3, 17 ff.: ‚Dieweil du gehorchet hast der Stimme deines Weibes . . . , sollst du zu Erde werden‘, so kommt damit zur Aussage, daß das Sterben . . . infolge der Übertretung des göttlichen Gebots in die Welt kam. Ebenso heißt es im Neuen Testament, Röm. 5, 12, von der Ursache des Todes: ‚Der Tod durch die Sünde‘, . . . und Röm. 6, 23: ‚Der Tod ist der Sünde Sold‘. . . . Die Schrift kennt nur den Tod, der ein Gericht über die Sünde ist. . . . So ist Gott die Ursache des Todes, insofern er als der gerechte Richter nach seiner Strafgerichtsbarkeit (*iustitia vindicativa*) über den Sünder den Tod als Strafübel (*malum poenae*) verhängt, Ps. 90, 7. 8: ‚Das macht dein Zorn, daß wir so vergehen . . . ; denn unsere Missetat stellest du vor dich‘. . . . Auch wenn Krankheiten, Alter, Feuer, Wasser, Schwert usw. als Todesursache genannt werden, so sind dies doch nur Mittelursachen, denen als letzte und eigentliche Ursache die eine Tatsache zugrunde liegt, daß die Sünde in die Welt gekommen ist und alle Menschen Sünder geworden sind. . . . Daß nicht die Zahl der Jahre an sich die Ursache des Todes ist, geht auch aus Ps. 90 hervor, wo nicht bloß die Todesfälle, die wir plötzliche nennen, sondern auch die nach siebenzig oder achtzig Jahren eintretenden auf den Zorn Gottes über die Sünde zurückgeführt werden. . . . Den Tod gerade als Sündenstrafe zu erkennen, gehört nach der Schrift zu der Klugheit, die allen Menschen nötig ist.“ (Dogmatik III, S. 569—571.) Ferner: „Wenn es Ps. 90, 12 heißt: ‚Lehre uns bedenken, daß wir sterben müssen, auf daß wir klug werden‘, so ist da nicht die Tatsache des Todes an sich, sondern die Tatsache des Todes als Folge der Sünde der Menschen gemeint, wie B. 7—11 ausdrücklich gesagt ist: ‚Unsere Missetat stellest du vor dich‘ usw.“ (Op. cit., S. 571, Anmerkung 1728.)

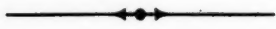
Der selbe: „Schuld und Strafe der Sünde sind auf Grund der Schrift unablässig zu lehren, weil der Mensch nach seiner verderbten Natur Schuld und Strafe wegzudisputieren sucht. . . . Auch die Christen,

sofern sie noch das Fleisch an sich haben, stehen in beständiger Gefahr, Schuld und Strafe der Sünde zu vergessen. . . . Daher die Bitte der Gläubigen Ps. 90, 12: „Lehr uns bedenken, daß wir sterben müssen, auf daß wir klug werden.“ . . . Hieran schließt sich die Frage, was von den Strafen zu halten sei, die auch noch über die Gläubigen in diesem Leben kommen, Ps. 73, 14. Den Gläubigen werden ja ihre Sünden nicht zugerechnet, Röm. 4, 8. Schuld und Strafe ihrer Sünden ist von ihnen genommen, Röm. 8, 33; Jes. 53, 5. 6. Sie haben Frieden mit Gott, Röm. 5, 1 ff. Die Schrift nennt jene Strafen einerseits auch ein göttliches Gericht über die Sünden der Gläubigen, 1 Pet. 4, 17: „Es ist Zeit, daß das Gericht (κρίμα) anfangen am Hause Gottes.“ Andererseits sagt die Schrift ebenso klar, daß diese Strafen den Charakter der väterlichen Züchtigung tragen (*castigationes paternae*) und die Bewahrung vor Abfall zum Zweck haben, 1 Kor. 11, 32: „Wenn wir gerichtet werden, so werden wir von dem Herrn gezüchtigt, auf daß wir nicht mit der Welt verdammet werden.“ Luther nennt daher die Strafen der Gläubigen „eine gnädige und fröhliche Strafe.“ (Dogmatik I, S. 643, 644.)

Prof. August Pieper zu Jes. 40, 7: „Das Gras verwelkt, die Blume fällt ab; denn der Geist des Herrn bläset drein“: „Die ganze Creatur liegt unter dem ununterbrochen fortwirkenden, vernichtenden Zorn Gottes um der Sünde der Menschen willen. . . . Diese Wahrheit ist die eine Hälfte der christlichen Lehre; die andere ist die von der Erlösung von Fluch und Not und Tod durch unsern Herrn Jesum Christum.“ (Jes. II, S. 26, 27.) Derselbe sagt zu Jes. 53, 5: „Die Strafe liegt auf ihm, auf daß wir Frieden hätten“, wörtlich: die Züchtigung unsers Friedens, das heißt, die zum Zweck unsers Friedens verhängte Züchtigung: „Diesen Satz hat Luther so genau und schön wieder gegeben, wie es möglich ist. Denn das Moment der Strafe liegt nun einmal unveräußerlich in aller Züchtigung“; also auch in der Züchtigung, die die Kinder Gottes leiden.

So sagen wir denn auf Grund dieser Ausführungen:

Daß wir sterben müssen, hat seine Ursache in dem Zorn Gottes über unsere Sünde; daß wir selig sterben können, ist die Gabe der sündenvergebenden Gnade Gottes in Christo Jesu, unserm Herrn.



Outlines on the Wuerttemberg Epistle Selections

Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity

2 Cor. 4:11-18

Trouble is the watchword of the times. Man's best ingenuity is bent toward the invention of new means of destruction and death. War and its aftermath mean the quickening of trouble throughout the world. The Christian religion does not lead its members to turn away from trouble or to deny the existence of trouble. But it teaches them to understand it. St. Paul in this text gives an interpretation of trouble in his own life and thereby defines

The Purpose of Affliction in the Christian Life

He shows that in God's plan affliction has a purpose

1. *In the life of him who is suffering*
2. *In the lives of those who live with the sufferer*

St. Paul is indeed speaking of himself as a Christian preacher. But his description of trouble and its purposes fits every Christian believer.

1

Affliction has a purpose for the Christian who is suffering.

A. St. Paul outlines two purposes which God wishes to achieve in the Christian through trouble. — 1. He wishes to strengthen the Christian's faith. The outward man may perish in affliction, but the inward man is renewed day by day, v. 16. Through all affliction there exists and grows in the Christian the conviction that God who raised up Jesus can also succor the Christian, v. 14. — 2. God wishes to lead the Christian to glory. Faith is the laying hold on the promises of God, the accepting of salvation in Christ Jesus. Rom. 3:22. Hence the strengthening of faith through affliction is bound up with the assurance of eternal glory, v. 17. The suffering Christian just through his affliction is made mindful of the fact that the eternal glory outweighs every earthly pain, v. 18. Rom. 8:18, 35 ff.

B. Hence the heavenly Father is carrying out high purposes in the Christian's affliction. — 1. He is doing this in whatever shape affliction assails the Christian. Some affliction, like persecution for the faith, is very evidently "for Jesus' sake." But every burden of life is to be born gladly, every suffering endured with zest, since it is a part of the Father's scheme to make us partakers of Christ's suffering, v. 11. 1 Pet. 4:12-14. Rom. 8:36. — 2. Affliction carries out the purposes of God not directly, but always through

a process: it must turn the Christian to God's love and grace as conveyed through the means. It turns away from preoccupation with worldly and earthly things and makes the eternal ones stand forth in their full value, v. 18. Then, as the Christian uses Word and Sacrament, his faith is strengthened and enriched, and thus the purpose of the trial of the faith in affliction is achieved. 1 Pet. 1:5, 12, 13.

2

Also for the fellow man the heavenly Father has purposes in the Christian's suffering.

A. God aims also at our fellow men through our own afflictions. — 1. "All things are for your sakes," v. 15. What appears to be a disaster and a trial in the Christian is proving to be a means of life for the fellow man; v. 12. — 2. It is essential that the Christian himself understand this, gain this "mental set" for his own suffering. He must view it as a labor of love, a means toward a great and splendid goal. The Christian suffers patiently, not because he imagines any merit to be in the suffering or in the martyrdom (ancient ascetics), but because it leads to higher things in himself and in those who surround him.

B. How the Christian's suffering is of benefit to his fellow man. — 1. The Christian's faith and patience work thanksgiving in the fellow man, v. 15. The Christian knows how to suffer, even wrongfully; in Christ he has resources of patience, endurance, good cheer, which he applies to his suffering. The observer is thereby led to recognize the Christian's gifts of character as a grace from a higher source, v. 15; 1 Pet. 2:12; Matt. 5:16. — 2. Merely noting that the Christian has a character and a patience, which is God's gift, or merely desiring to possess a similar character, does not mean that the goal and purpose of God for the Christian's fellow man has been reached. But this insight into the Christian's character is to lead the neighbor of the Christian to receive the word of the Gospel, v. 13. 1 Pet. 3:14-16. Phil. 2:15, 16 — "holding forth the word of life."

The Christian's steadfastness under suffering will call the attention of his fellow man to the Gospel of Christ, which has so marvelous a power. This purpose of suffering is of signal importance in a day when the fashions of life turn away from the Church and men become cynical and materialistic. May God help every Christian to suffer his own trials of faith for good and thereby also be a light to others! Amen.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

Twenty-Third Sunday after Trinity

Rev. 21:1-8

Not like a rosebud gradually unfolding, but like the bud of the evening primrose bursting to bloom, so "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," and complete immediately, time will cease and break into eternity. The text, still applying the element of time, describes the last moment, placed beyond Christ's execution of His judgment, when He utters His majestic "It is done" (*gegonan — factum est*). We pilgrims yearn, filled by faith with the ardent desire for that last moment, and in anticipation we ask: What shall be all the joy laid up for me? Lord, I know not: eyes are holden till Jerusalem the Golden in its beauty I shall see. The text tells us what we are to expect in the very moment when heaven's light floods down upon us and when we get our first glimpse of the eternal Zion. We do not know whether that happy moment belongs still to time or already to eternity. But do you yearn for it? Let us meditate on

That Happy Moment Which Dissolves Into Eternity

1. *In which the former things are passed away*
2. *For which we prepare by faith in Jesus Christ*

1

The first part of the text opens to us a vision pertaining to the future and to our eternal bliss. — The former things are the separation from God, tears, death, sorrow, crying, pain. — These were caused by sin. — God will terminate these former things by (a) full restoration of the knowledge of Him and communion with Him, v. 3 (which is the chief joy in heaven, the source of all happiness), and (b) deliverance from all evil, v. 4, personally perpetrated, or inflicted by others mentioned in v. 8, who can no longer vex us. — God revealed in Christ Jesus, vv. 5, 6, is the Creator and Author of all this newness, and the manner of His creating all things new is described vv. 1-3, while the New Jerusalem is pictured vv. 10-27. — And then eternity begins, and the last moment of time is gone.

When the former things are passed away, the result is newness. To achieve this newness, Christ restored us to God, Col. 1: 15-22. Until the former things are passed away, we are still subject to the experiences of these things: God sometimes seems so far away, we shed tears, we die, we mourn, we see sorrow, we weep, we hear crying, we suffer pain and behold it in others. John 16:33; Acts 14:22. But the text comforts us, presenting the last moment (a) with an appeal to our physical senses, promising relief and deliverance from all troubles, v. 4; (b) with an appeal to our soul, to our faith in Christ, to our love to Christ, desire

for Christ, hope built on Christ, culminating in the eternal communion with Christ, v. 3. Can we fully imagine such bliss? No! "Bliss beyond our dreams is granted." 1 Cor. 13:12; 1 John 3:2; Ps. 17:15. What is new then, will remain new forever. "It is done."

This comfort is applied to the individual Christian. *Πάν δάκρυον* (sing.=every tear) means every tear ever shed by any one believer. All other former things mentioned in v. 4 are also in the singular, though their appearance in our present life seems altogether too frequent and of duration too long. Christ gives to each of us, to each of our woes, personal attention. — This comfort is applied to the Church, v. 3, and to the creature, Rom. 8:18-23.

Transition. Let us wait patiently for that happy moment. We must not lose it. We want to be there. Let us prepare for it. How? Answer vv. 5-8.

2

The second part of the vision presents to us a warning and a sure promise. It pertains to the present time, to our present life.

The divine verdict, v. 8, is Law. The Ten Commandments remain in force. The condemned stand in contrast to the blessed. The eternal woe is executed upon the ungodly, the most terrible moment for them. We are terrified, because the curse covers also the fine transgressors. Have we a way of escape? Have we not forfeited all happiness of that last moment? Hymn 317.

The terrified are the athirst. To these the promise in vv. 6 and 7 is given. This is the Gospel. It remains in force, v. 6 b. It is the power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1:16. It proclaims and gives to us the adoption of sons, v. 7 b. It renders us victorious and makes us heirs to all the new things, v. 7 a. In the Gospel the Author of our happiness reveals Himself as the almighty Savior, vv. 5 and 6, whose word of promise stands sure, Ps. 33:4.

By faith in Jesus Christ we are prepared for that happy moment, Acts 16:31. Hymn 619, vv. 2 and 7. May we all be there. Hallelujah!

G. H. SMUKAL

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Heb. 11:1-10

Hebrew Christians, at the beginning of the New Testament Church, may have thought longingly of the beautiful forms of worship in the Temple at Jerusalem, especially of the impressive sacrifices with the elaborate ceremonies. All that was now abolished, having been only the shadow of things now fulfilled. Now, there was so much talk about faith, "mere" faith. In a similar manner one may hear faith belittled today. Indeed, we, too, may

have had such thoughts about "mere" faith. It is well, therefore, that we be reminded again of what faith really is and what it accomplishes.

Faith

1. *Its essence*

2. *Its power*

1

V.1. Here we are told what faith is. It is not an illusion, a dream, an imagination. It is not mere knowledge of the head, not theoretical knowledge, not the result of logical thinking, of a careful weighing of pro and con. Logical thinking has to do with things that are visible, that can be perceived with our senses. But faith has to do with things not seen, things hoped for, things that one would enjoy and longingly look for. Such things are what Christ has prepared for us through His atoning sacrifice, forgiveness of sins, the privilege of being God's children, eternal bliss in heaven.

These things are not seen. That we are children of God through Jesus Christ and heirs of heaven, is hidden in this life. That there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus cannot be seen, yea, we ourselves often feel the very opposite. But faith is the substance of these invisible things; it gives them shape and form; it makes them realities; it makes them real and certain to us. Thus faith becomes the evidence of their reality and certainty, so that we enjoy them in this life; they are a real comfort to us. By faith we are sure, know, and are convinced that God for Jesus' sake is pleased with us and has set aside for us eternal life.

V.2. So it was in the Old Testament. All those that had this faith were by it assured of God's pleasure. V.3. Faith implicitly, without question, accepts God's Word. Therefore a believer knows and understands what human reason is unable to grasp, that the world came into being by the Word of God, was created out of nothing. The believer knows that, because God has revealed it in His Word. In like manner faith accepts what God has revealed about our redemption and salvation, even contrary to appearances in this life. Oh, faith is something marvelous, it is the Spirit-wrought conviction that God's promises of grace in Christ Jesus are eternally true. From this it follows that such faith has marvelous powers.

2

Vv. 4-10. The holy writer here tells of people who had faith in God's promises of grace and shows the power of their faith. Abel's sacrifice became acceptable and pleasing to God because of his faith. His faith in God's mercy through the promised Redeemer urged him to bring his thank offering. In some way not revealed to us God let him know of His pleasure. Faith gave

him the assurance that he was righteous. Enoch was translated into heaven without seeing and feeling the bitterness of death. He had faith, he believed in the promised Redeemer, and such faith brought forth the fruit of a God-pleasing life. Without faith it is impossible to please God, without faith man will flee from God, but faith seeks Him, looks up to Him as a refuge and help, because faith knows that God is merciful and forgiveth sins, because Christ has atoned for them. Thus faith drives away fear and brings love and childlike trust.

Therefore Noah, having faith in God's word when he was told of the coming flood, at once acted upon it. He built the Ark as he was told. He did not listen to the derisive remarks of his fellow men, who perhaps called him an old fool. The flood, though 120 years away, was real to him, and he prepared for it. Faith urged him to build the Ark. Thus faith in God's word saved him and his family, while the mockers perished. What an example of the power of faith!

Abraham received the command from God to leave his home, his kin, his country, to emigrate to a country unknown to him. He received the promise that that country should be his own and that of his descendants. Abraham believed. And his faith in the faithfulness of God made him willing to obey. He followed God's direction. When he could not find and obtain an abiding dwelling place in the land promised to him, when he had to live like a nomad in tents and move from place to place, only tolerated by the people living there—his faith gave him courage to carry on. Also his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob had this faith. Their faith rose above earthly things; it clung to the promise of the Redeemer, in whom all the nations should be blessed.

Faith in God's grace through Jesus Christ makes us look and yearn for the eternal city of heaven. Unconcerned about earthly conditions, be they good or bad, faith makes us deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. (Tit. 2: 12, 13.) Such is the power of faith.

Let us ask God to create and preserve in us such living faith!

H. J. BOUMAN

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Trinity

James 4:4-10

This Sunday concludes another church year. Graciously the Lord has continued to draw nigh unto us through His Gospel. Let us consider how we used this extended grace. 2 Pet. 3:9 (all should

come to repentance); Matt. 25:13. We are still believers, but we also have cause for repentance. Sin is offense against God. Text loudly calls us to humility.

Let Us Humble Ourselves

1. *What reason we have to humble ourselves*
2. *The blessings of true humility*

1

The stern words of our text are addressed to Christians. (Brethren: ch. 1:2, 9; 4:11.) Does it seem strange that Christians are addressed thus? Let us not misunderstand the Apostle. He is not charging Christians with gross physical adultery, but spiritual adultery. This is evidenced by the fact that he immediately adds "friendship of the world." Friendship of the world here called adultery. As a husband must be faithful to his wife, so the Christian to the Lord.

V. 4. Also Christians are tempted to curry the favor of the world; show deference to the views of the age (*Zeitgeist*). The course of this world — death in trespasses and sins, Eph. 2:2. The God of this world blinds the minds, 2 Cor. 4:4. This present world is evil, Gal. 1:4. The desire of this world is lust, 1 John 2:16. Have we as Christians always drawn a sharp line of demarcation between the things God wants and those the world suggests? Whoever sets his mind on the things the world loves constitutes himself an enemy of God. V. 4 b.; Rom. 8:9.

V. 5. The Scriptures are often treated lightly, as if they speak "in vain." Threats and promises are considered to be empty, *κενῶς*. V. 5 b illustrates whereto despising of the Scriptures leads. The Old Testament Scriptures *teach*, *λέγει* — *e. g.*, in the Ninth and Tenth Commandments; Num. 11:29; Prov. 21:10. (V. 5 b no direct quotation.) "Doth the Spirit which took up its abode within us (*i. e.*, the Holy Spirit) long enviously?" Thayer. Social sins are inevitable result of despising God's Word.

V. 6. Pride is closely allied to envy; it arises from a spirit of insubordination to God; disregards his admonitions and judgments. Cf. Pharaoh of Oppression, Ex. 5—14. This inordinate self-esteem also tempts church members. A youth considers himself too intelligent to work with the common people of the church; a girl too accomplished to associate with the other young people of the church; a woman too talented; a businessman too important. Since the beginning of this church year God has permitted war to come upon our country, and yet many treat this thunderous voice of God's wrath with as much contempt as His Gospel. All such God resists.

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As Christians we abhor all spiritual adultery, but our Old Adam is ever ready to compromise with sin. Let us avoid all double-mindedness and rather humble ourselves; the more so because of the blessings of true humility.

2

V. 6. Humility, of course, is a gift of God. 1 Cor. 15:10 a. That we repent of our sins, believe on Christ Jesus, is all God's gift. This gift will increase. V. 6 a. Realizing that *He* gives grace, we will not boast of our accomplishments but rather humble ourselves. The more we decrease in our estimation, the more Jesus increases in us. Micah 6:8; Col. 3:12.

V. 7. Humbling ourselves is subjecting ourselves. Whoever subjects himself to God thereby resists the devil. V. 7 b is an implied condition. The devil must repeatedly be resisted. Cf. Matt. 4:5, 8. Military expressions are used: submit—obey orders; resist—"take a bold stand over against an enemy and do not retreat"; flee. Humbling ourselves before God and putting on His armor (Eph. 6:11 ff.) we have power to overcome temptations. 1 John 5:18 b. Power over temptation is a blessing of humility.

V. 8. True humility looks to the Lord for help. "Draw near." Matt. 11:28; John 6:37; Ps. 37:39 f. "He—gives me power—to walk in godliness and good works." The Lord cleanses the hands of the humble that they work that which is good. He makes their heart chaste that they do good works in the proper spirit. "Let us ever walk with Jesus."

Vv. 9 and 10. True humility is not pleasant to our sinful flesh. To be wretched, to mourn over our sin, is not the way of our depraved nature. Yet how blessed! Grace from God, power over evil, companionship with the Lord, production of good works is the beginning of exaltation in this life, and it will be continued on a far grander scale in the heaven of glories.

Looking backward over the past church year, let us humble ourselves because of our manifold sins. Looking forward into the new church year, let us draw near to God, and He will give us more grace.

VICTOR MENNICKE

Thanksgiving Day

Lam. 3:22

Do conditions today warrant services of thanksgiving? Some may suggest their omission at this time. After years of disturbing conditions within our country our nation has been plunged into the seething caldron which threatens to destroy the nations. However, God's children realize that despite the dreadful conditions

on earth we have reason to thank God. May God inscribe this truth into our hearts and lives on this Thanksgiving Day.

Despite the Present Evil Day We Have Reason to Thank God

1. *We are not consumed*
2. *We must ascribe this to God's mercy*

1

"This I recall to my mind; therefore have I hope." (V. 21.) In the foregoing chapters the Prophet had described Israel's pathetic and distressful condition. The divine seer is attending the funeral of Jerusalem. He foresees not merely the horrible captivity, but also the destruction of the Temple of God. Nevertheless, one thing he wanted to remember: v. 21.

Also we in this day of hatred and strife, war, and bloodshed, destruction and devastation, severing of family ties, shifting of population, enormous increase of taxes and living costs, resultant fear and consternation, should remember that though we have deserved it, "we are not consumed."

Have we deserved it? What caused the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah? Especially sins against the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Commandments and utter forsaking of God. Also true of Nineveh, Israel, Judah, etc. — What about our national sins: adultery, fornication, robbery, theft, murder, disrespect for superiors, misuse of God's name, despising God's Word, ruling God out of one's life, etc.? — However, let us mention not merely national sins, but consider sins of which we Christians have been guilty: indifference toward God and Sacrament, worldliness, excessive drink, gluttony, sinful amusements, neglect of home life, prayer, etc. God used the severe rod of the depression, but how few repented and turned unto the Lord! Now God speaks the thundering language of war. Has there been repentance and improvement?

Nevertheless, we are not consumed as we have deserved. God has provided necessities of life. Shortages and rationing of foods and materials, 'tis true, but we've had sufficient. Spiritual blessings in abundance in home congregations, in army camps, on battlefields. We have had Christ, Calvary, forgiveness, eternal life.

2

The Prophet ascribes everything to God's mercy and compassion. It is well to emphasize this, for we are inclined to ascribe everything to our ingenuity, wisdom, ability, and we boast of our accomplishments. It is hard for us to admit "all this purely out of fatherly, divine goodness," etc. We must remember that God

sends rain and sunshine. He gives health and strength of mind and body. We labor, but He blesses. — God guards and protects; without Him we could not exist. The present plight on earth shows man's woeful weakness and helplessness. If we have not suffered devastations as in other parts of the world, it was not our accomplishment, but God's mercy. With regard to spiritual blessings, we have contributed even less. Christ earned them. The Holy Spirit works the faith within us by which we appropriate them.

Let us declare this before God and men in our services today, in our homes, and wherever opportunity presents itself. Let us show by our life and conduct that we believe this. Give God and His mercy all credit and glory. Cf. Gen. 32:10; Ps. 68:19; 115:1, etc.

"His compassions fail not"—as in the past so also in the future. What comfort in these perilous days! How thankful we should be for this assurance! How fervently we should pray that God might bestow mercy and compassion upon us, our country, our armed forces, the young men and women who are serving our country, the nations of the world, that God might soon bring about a just and honorable peace! We may well pray confidently, for "His compassions fail not."

J. W. BEHNKEN

Outlines on Old Testament Texts (Synodical Conference)

First Sunday in Advent

Psalm 24

We have here an admonition addressed to gates and doors. Gates stand for the city and its inhabitants, and the exhortation is addressed to Jerusalem and the whole nation of Israel. From eternity God had chosen Israel to be His own people, Is. 43:21. This admonition has not lost its force today, though Israel has been rejected. The New Testament Church of God is the Church of Jesus Christ, composed of Jews and Gentiles, Eph. 1:3-6; 2:19-22; Heb. 12:22. It is this city, the Church of God, that is exhorted,

Welcome Your Coming King of Glory!

We ask with the Psalmist,

1. *Who is this King of Glory?*
2. *Who shall stand in His holy place?*

1

V. 8 a. So asks the Psalmist and answers his own question in triumphant accents, vv. 8 b, 10 b. It is the Lord, the unchanging God, who has Himself defined this name, Ex. 3:14, 15; 34:6, 7. It is

the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord of all the earth, vv. 1, 2. What a comfort to know that God still rules the world, that our King Jesus sits on His throne and rules the nations according to His will for the welfare of His Church, Ps. 2:6-8; Eph. 1:20-23.

It is the Lord, mighty in battle, He who had battled for Israel held captive in Egypt, Ex. 15:1-11; who protected them throughout their journey to the Promised Land; who in the darkest days of idolatry preserved His Church, 1 Kings 19:18. It is the Lord who fought the battle against Satan in Gethsemane, who still protects His Church against all the attacks of its enemies, Matt. 16:18; Ps. 2:1-5, 9, 10. Lift up your heads, ye children of Zion, rejoice in this mighty King who comes to you. He knows how to protect His Church and all its individual members in these troublous times.

It is the Lord of hosts, v. 10. To Him sang the morning stars, Job 38:7, in His honor the heavenly hosts chanted their joyous song, Luke 2:13, 14. Him the angels serve, Matt. 4:11; Rev. 5:11, 12. Who else has a king so glorious? — These angels He sends out to serve us, Matt. 18:10; Heb. 1:14. Who else has servants of such majesty sent by their and our King of Glory? Lift up your heads, O Christians! Away with sorrow and doubt and fear! Your King of Glory cometh in.

2

V. 3. Who shall be fit to receive Him, be accepted of Him and ascend with Him to His royal palace? The answer v. 4. The two external characteristics are placed at the beginning and end of the verse, surrounding, as it were, the two internal marks of God's people. Only he who has a pure heart is ready to receive the coming King. No man can purify his own heart, that vile thing, Jer. 17:9; Matt. 15:19. God alone can and must do that, Ps. 51:7, 10. He, as the God of salvation, cleanses our heart by faith in the atoning blood of Christ, Acts 15:9; 1 John 1:7; 1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 9:14; 10:22. The Christian's soul, instead of relying on the vanity of self-righteousness, rejoices in the imputed righteousness of Christ. Is. 61:10.

The fruit of this change of heart and spirit becomes manifest in word and deed. The hands are kept clean, Ps. 26:6, doing only such works as are pleasing to God. The mouth is on its guard against deceit, particularly against using God's name in vain and deceitfully dealing with one's neighbor. Warn here against the sin of cursing, again becoming so common.

V. 5. Such a man relying on Christ for justification and striving after sanctification will receive a blessing from the Lord. This blessing comprises all material and spiritual gifts bestowed in so rich a manner upon His people by the King of Glory. He will give righteousness, will help, instruct, strengthen, preserve them

in holiness, so that they grow more and more unto a perfect man. Eph. 4:13; 2 Pet. 1:5-7. This alone is the generation of seekers after God, v. 6, the true Jacob, servants of God, worthy to stand in God's holy Church on earth and enter with Him into Jerusalem above.

Lift up your heads to meet the King of Glory coming to us! Let us seek His face as He reveals Himself in Word and Sacrament. Let this new church year be a year of diligent hearing, learning, meditating, obeying, doing His Word. Let us re-consecrate our body and soul to His service; trust His grace and power to protect and preserve His Church in these last days of sore distress; commend ourselves and loved ones at home and abroad to His loving care; submit in all things to His holy will, and help to spread His kingdom near and far.

TH. LAETSCH

Second Sunday in Advent

Deut. 18:15-22

David, the man after God's own heart, was king of Israel and at the same time a prophet, foretelling the life and death and resurrection of his greater Son, Christ Jesus. Like David, his Son, the King, whose advent to His Church we celebrated last Sunday, is at the same time a great Prophet, the greatest of all, prophesied by God 1500 years before His coming into the world.

God's Promise Concerning Our Divine Prophet

This promise speaks to us

1. *Of a marvelous gift*
2. *Of an unescapable obligation*

1

This prophecy was given when the Law was being proclaimed from Mt. Sinai, vv. 16, 17. Every detail is fulfilled in Christ Jesus and His Gospel of grace and life.

A. His person:

1. He was raised from the midst of Israel, vv. 15, 18; the Seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the Son of David, Luke 1:27, 32, 69, etc. The man Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. 2; Phil. 2:6-8, as such able to have compassion with us, Heb. 2:16-18; 4:15.

2. Like Moses He was a Prophet, Matt. 14:5; Heb. 1:1, 2a; Mediator, 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24; the Deliverer of His people, Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:68-79; 2:11, 29-32.

3. He was greater than Moses, who directs his people from his own person to this greater Prophet, v. 15. Compare Heb. 3:1-6; 1:1-3. Christ performed more miracles than Moses, Deut. 36:10-12 compared with John 20:30, 31; 21:25. With Moses God spake mouth

to mouth, Num. 12:8; Deut. 36:10. Of Jesus we read John 1:18; 3:13. This Prophet is the Son of God Himself.

B. His message. — Moses' message was terrifying, v. 16. Ex. 19:16-18; 20:18-21; Deut. 5:25; Heb. 12:18-21. The message of Jesus is grace and truth and peace, John 1:16, 17; Matt. 11:28-30. This message is reliable, for it is God's Word, v. 18; John 3:11; 7:16; 8:26-28.

What a wonderful gift: A Prophet sent of God, the exact image of the Lord of Glory, proclaiming to us God's own plan of salvation which He Himself carried out.

2

Unto Him ye shall hearken! V. 15. Here are words of life, Is. 55:1 f., able to save to the uttermost, John 17:20-24; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:24, cleansing our conscience from dead works and enabling us to serve the living God, Heb. 9:14.

This is an unescapable obligation, v. 19. Heb. 2:1-4. Hear this Prophet, and ye shall live. Refuse, reject Him, and you are hopelessly lost. There is hope for a man who transgresses the word of Moses, for Christ came to proclaim salvation for just such men. There is no hope for anyone who will not hear this Prophet, Heb. 10:26-31.

Let us hear Him. Let us not be deceived by false prophets, Jer. 23:16-32; Luke 21:8. Let us hear Him particularly in these times of uncertainty and unrest. Thousands upon thousands run to soothsayers, etc., condemned by the Lord, vv. 21, 22; Deut. 18:9-14; Is. 8:19-22. Let us be satisfied with Jesus' Word. Let us not endeavor to lift the veil which God in His wisdom and love has placed over the future. Our Prophet assures us Luke 12:6, 7; 21:18, 19; Rom. 8:31-39. He teaches us to pray, Ps. 31:14, 15 a; confidently to exclaim, Job 13:15 a; Rom. 14:8. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift, our Prophet, Christ Jesus!

TH. LAETSCH



Theological Observer. — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

Lutheran Professor Buried at Sea.—Professor August William Edwins, D.D., was one of the repatriates to leave China at the end of June, but he died at sea after but three days and early on the morning of the fourth day was lowered to his watery grave.

Dr. Edwins was a pioneer missionary of the Augustana Synod in Honan Province, having come to China at the age of 34. He served 37 years. From 1919 to 1942 he was teacher of systematic theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Shekow, which is near Hankow. He was honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the Rock Island Seminary some years ago. He is survived by his wife, Elfrieda Edwins, and by nine children.

The writer met Dr. Edwins for the first time on a river boat that took Americans out of Central China to Shanghai to await the vessel to take us to South Africa. He was a very cheerful man and liked to speak on doctrinal and church matters, in which he took a very conservative stand. On June 19 while waiting for the day we were to leave he suffered a stroke in Shanghai in the night. Kind friends cared for him and placed him in a hospital, where he seemed to be gaining strength. The Swiss and Japanese authorities very kindly consented to let him continue on his journey, and on June 29, as the *Conte Verde* left Shanghai with her 636 passengers from the interior of China, Dr. Edwins was among them, although brought aboard on a stretcher. It was thought better for him to be among friends on the boat than among strangers in Shanghai. But God considered his labors on earth finished and on July 2 gathered his soul unto Himself. At 4:30 A.M. from the stern of the ship after brief services in charge of his fellow worker in China, Dr. Gustav Carlberg, his remains were committed to the care of his Maker and lowered silently to the mighty deep.

Thus passed the beloved seventy-one-year-old confessor of faith in the Far East.

E. C. ZIMMERMANN

The Christian and Fraternal Orders.—The report of Synod's Lodge Committee (Rev. O. F. Engelbrecht) in the *Fiscal Conference Minutes* (Aug. 4—6, 1942) occupies eleven pages in the mimeographed publication produced by our *Publicity Bureau*. The writer of this article believes that the report should be carefully studied by our pastors and presented in outline or summary to all our congregations. It is clear and sober, and attacks the problem with good common sense and in an evangelical way. Our *Publicity Bureau*, we are happy to announce, is willing to send out the report to pastors asking for it, and this is a service which deserves grateful acknowledgment. We dare not become indifferent on the lodge problem. The following editorial, which under the heading given above, appeared in *The Calvin Forum* (August-September, 1942) supplies many reasons. We read:

"We have just entered upon the diamond jubilee year of the one American magazine devoted to the militant *exposé* of secret fraternal organizations. That magazine is now known as *Christian Cynosure* (850 West Madison Street, Chicago, Ill.), but was founded under the name

the *Christian Banner*. The committee of Christian men which in June, 1868, resolved to issue this paper consisted of thirteen men, of whom J. Blanchard and Ezra A. Cook are possibly best known. The latter became the first editor of the proposed paper, the former was undoubtedly the leader in the movement. The Blanchard name has for decades been honorably associated with Wheaton College and with the *Christian Cynosure*. It took courage publicly to throw down the gauntlet to the lodge, that idol of the American Protestant people. But these men knew what they were doing. There was no malice in their hearts toward any persons. Volume I, Number 1, of the *Christian Banner*, issued July 5, 1868, quoted resolutions passed at the Pittsburgh Convention against Secret Societies, held in May of that year, as follows: 'Resolved, That whilst we declare our determination to maintain decided and continuous opposition to all Secret Societies as deistical, antagonistic to Christianity . . . we regard a large portion of the members as well-meaning, but mistaken persons. Toward them all we cherish the most kindly Christian feeling and ask them calmly to consider the exceptions we take to their Orders.' No personal animosity, but deep convictions of Christian truth and morals prompted these men to take their stand against the growing evil of lodgism. How deeply entrenched this evil is even today among Protestant Christians, anyone who has his eyes open can know. It is not that these organizations do not accomplish a great deal of good. They do! No one will cast reflections upon their charitable activities. But whatever good they may do in a social way in the world at large, no man of Christian convictions can join them. For years it has been felt by many churches in our land that the obligations involved in church membership and those imposed by lodge affiliation are incompatible. Nor is this an old-fashioned prejudice, as those who have succumbed to the powerful influence wielded by the secret empire often like to make themselves believe. Christian repudiation of lodge membership stands on sound Biblical ground. The secret, oathbound character of these fraternal organizations cannot be harmonized with sound Christian ethical conduct. Not only does this involve an unjustifiable use of the oath, but no Christian has a right to swear secrecy before God in the matters transacted within the precincts of the lodge. And no less serious is the indictment which the orthodox, Bible-believing Christian makes against the *creed* of the lodge. For the lodge has a creed, the denials of its devotees notwithstanding. The lodge stands for the deistic, Unitarian, moralistic conception of the Christian religion. With blissful inconsistency many people belong to a church that professes to believe the deity of Christ, the vicarious atonement and salvation by faith in Christ's sacrificial work on Calvary, and likewise to the lodge, which in its liturgy and other religious utterances is frankly deistic, Unitarian, and autosoteric. If anyone doubts the essential harmony between a Unitarian view of Christianity and the American secret societies, let him treat himself to a free copy of the pamphlet distributed free by the American Unitarian Association (25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.) entitled, *The Relation of the Liberal Churches and the Fraternal Orders*. Secretism and Modernism are spiritual twins."

J. T. M.

Relations between the U. L. C. A. and the Federal Council.— It was in 1922, in its convention at Buffalo, N. Y., that the U. L. C. A. adopted resolutions pertaining to its connections with the Federal Council. At that time it resolved, "The relationship shall be of a consultative character by which the United Lutheran Church may have a voice but no vote, thus securing to it entire autonomy from beginning to end in regard to the decisions and actions of the Federal Council of Churches, and at the same time the privilege of co-operating in such tasks and problems as it may elect." According to the minutes of that meeting the committee which prepared the resolutions stated that (1) the Federal Council in its confessional declarations ascribes too little importance "to the faith and its confession"; (2) the Council exhibits a too strong tendency to set up much machinery in the effort to have the world in its organisms follow Christian principles, even though the world in these organisms has not been converted to Christian principle; (3) the Federal Council "does not clearly, definitely, and specifically set forth the things in which the churches may co-operate without anyone of them being let into an acquiescence with what it regards as error or into the suppression of its testimony to the truth which it holds." According to an editorial in the *Lutheran* from which the above points are taken, the Federal Council was willing to have the U. L. C. A. join it on its own terms and appointed members of the U. L. C. A. to the following four commissions: Administrative, Washington Committee (Army and Navy), Christian Education, and International Justice and Good Will.

A committee of the U. L. C. A., appointed to make recommendations on the question whether the U. L. C. A. should offer to become a regular member of the Federal Council, has published its recommendations, which are negative. A.

The State and Conscience.— From an editorial in *America* (Roman Catholic) we take over these sentences, "Said Reich Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels: The German people must acquire a considerable amount of 'a sound national egoism that overrules the desire to be unbiased and just and unconditionally backs national interests, unaffected by any sentimentality.' He went on: 'The bourgeois era of false ideals about humanity is past, and a hard century has come into being. It is not mastered by squeamishness, but only by manliness and strength. . . . We hate the British from the depth of our feelings.'" Here is a high government official inculcating hatred in the people whom he is supposed to lead. (It should be stated that the teaching of hatred is not confined to the Axis countries.) If we were living in Germany and were citizens of that country, what would have to be our reaction? Certainly we should have to say that when the government commands us to do something that is sinful, we must not obey. It is true, we should not expect the civil government to be guided by the Bible. The civil government is a government for all the people, Christians and un-Christians, and to have a common basis for its laws and ordinances, it must simply rely on the principles of the moral law implanted in every heart and on common sense or reason. In this case, of course, even the moral law implanted in man's heart will condemn what Herr Goebbels demands. For the

Christian, however, the Bible will be the guide even in matters of a political and civic nature. He will, for instance, recognize that the government in its divorce laws will not be as strict as the Scriptures are, but he himself will seek to observe what the Scriptures say on this subject. The Christians throughout Germany will have to reject the remarks of Minister Goebbels as contradicting the highest law which exists for them.

A.

The Church in Norway Triumphs.—According to very recent dispatches the Lutheran Church in Norway has successfully withstood the onslaughts of the Quisling government; it is reported now that whatever unfavorable action had been taken has been canceled. It seems that Berlin, reversing itself, brought pressure to bear on the Norwegian government, demanding that the friction caused by invasion of the Church's sphere by the civil authorities be removed. The *Christian Century* in its issue of September 9 publishes an editorial on this change of front on the part of the Quisling government and says, "The revelation of the Church's courage and integrity has proved a shocking discovery for many of Europe's 'intellectuals.' They had written it off as decadent decades ago, and it had become a matter of habit among them to scoff at the idea that any moral vigor might remain in religion. Now they find out how wrong they were and how important a part the Church will have a right to play when the madness of Hitlerism has spent its force. The calm heroism with which Norway's bishops and pastors have maintained the freedom of their Church has written one of the brightest pages in modern Christian history." This is a glowing tribute. Assuming that the news on which it is based is true we rejoice that the Lutheran Church in Norway, numerous though its imperfections may be, has preserved its independence of foreign control and has been victorious in its resistance to attempts to make it a servile creature of the state.

A.

Brief Items.—The following communication in *America* (Roman Catholic) will be of interest to our readers: "The statement that 'the working classes are lost to the Church' was made in 1925 by Pius XI in a private audience with Canon Joseph Cardijn of Brussels. It was made when Canon Cardijn came to interview the Pope about the J. O. C. (Young Christian Workers) of Belgium. It was about 1925 when Canon Cardijn officially founded the J. O. C. It is a form of specialized Catholic action adapted to working youth. His Holiness, Pius XI, has pointed Jocism out as a model of accomplished Catholic action for the workers." How about "the working classes" and the Lutheran Church?

According to one of our exchanges our nation's forces lost 24 chaplains on Bataan or Corregidor, who either were captured by the Japanese or killed. The report on which this information is based was issued by Chief of Chaplains W. R. Arnold on August 29.

Presbyterianism has reached a new peak as far as numbers are concerned. In 1941 there was a net increase of 27,245 new members. At the end of the year the church numbered 2,040,492 members. Last year 8,764 Presbyterian churches contributed \$44,758,104.

A.

Book Review — Literatur

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

Simple Talks on the Tabernacle. By D.H. Dolman. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 228 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$. Price, \$1.50.

Dr. Dolman, who took great interest in teaching Jewish young men the way of salvation, is a fundamentalist and holds to many truths now denied by liberals. Yet in presenting these Scriptural truths the author too frequently adopts a mode of interpretation not in keeping with sound Scriptural hermeneutics. We believe all that the Scripture passages concerning the tabernacle tell us, but where does Scripture tell us that the "badger's skin speaks to us of a Savior who emptied Himself of His glory and took the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7), of One who had come 'not to be ministered unto, but to minister, to give His life a ransom for many' (Matt. 20:28). It speaks of a high priest who on the day of atonement put aside His garment of glory and put on the linen coat (Lev. 16:4). It speaks of the Son of man, who less than foxes and birds, had not where to lay His head (Luke 9:58)" (p. 153). And where is warrant for the meaning of the five bars of acacia wood holding together the boards of the tabernacle as explained by Dolman: "Five bars of acacia wood overlaid with gold, fastened in staples of gold, held the twenty boards on each side closely and firmly together. . . . These bars together with the silver sockets helped to bear the boards up and keep them from falling down. The lowest bar joining God's children together reminds us that God's children all over the world have all the word of God as food for their souls. . . . The second bar tells us that *united prayer* joins God's children together. . . . The third bar tells us that there is one bread we break, one table spread for us. . . . The next bar tells us there is still another bond that joins God's children together (*universal prayer*). . . . The fifth bar joins the boards from the inside and goes through the midst of the wood. When one goes to different churches, one often hears the complaint that there is so little brotherly love. We need not be surprised at it; the middle bar is lacking" (p. 124 f.).

With regard to the symbolism of the Temple and its service there are many lessons taught by Scripture and lessons of sufficient importance to fill many a book. Yet we must be on our guard against proffering our own fancies and imaginations as lessons intended by the Holy Spirit and insisting that Scripture teaches what we surmise or imagine. That is opening the door wide to human interpretations and fantastic additions. That is twisting and garbling the words of Scripture and slowly but surely undermining the authority and clarity of the Bible. In interpreting Scripture let us not read into any one passage our own thoughts, though they may be taught elsewhere in Scripture.

Let us rather be satisfied with what Scripture actually states in the passage under consideration, what the words actually say and express. Only then can we truthfully assert: Thus saith the Lord!

TH. LAETSCH

Behind the Opened Hedge. By E. H. Tanis. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 114 pp., 5×7½. Price, \$1.00.

The author, a pastor of the Reformed Church, offers twenty-five meditations on the Book of Job. The discerning pastor will find many an apt remark and many a suitable illustration which he may use in his sermon work. His exposition of Job 19 and 33 in Chapters 16 and 23 does not at all satisfy. Both Job and Elihu knew more than the author seems willing to concede. Both knew of the promised Woman's Seed in whom Job rejoiced as his Redeemer and Deliverer, and not merely his vindicator (p. 77), and whom Elihu has in mind when he endeavors to comfort Job, 33: 23-28.

TH. LAETSCH

Along the Highway of Prayer. By Mrs. A. T. Robertson. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 73 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, 35 cents.

The author is the widow of the well-known Baptist theologian Prof. A. T. Robertson, who for many years taught at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary of Louisville, Ky. In thirteen chapters she briefly writes on prayers of spiritual struggles, intercession, thanksgiving, confidence and praise, war, dedications, confession, on answered and unanswered prayers, prayers of Jesus, the early Church, and Paul's prayers. Her brief notes frequently throw an illuminating light on the passage treated and bespeak a Christian woman of wide and varied Christian experience. I do not believe that "only the greatest in the Old Testament realized the tender love of God which the New Testament teaches us all." (P. 54.) While they did not realize the fullness of God's love in the measure revealed in the New Testament, all believing children of God in the Old Testament gratefully realized His love evidenced in His many material and spiritual benefits. It was not Peter's prayer that took him "through such a wall of prejudice," but the heavenly vision, Acts 10, and the experience at Caesarea. As an example of the style we append the following paragraph from "Paul's Prayers for the Churches": "The church at Philippi was especially dear to Paul. They alone shared his missionary enthusiasm, and it kept them sound and sweet. He wrote to them with joy and exultation. But Euodias and Syntyche, both great workers, would not work together and spoiled the happiness of the church life. The bondage of the law, the grossness of heathenism, the buzzing isms, — these disturbed the early Christians, and the devil besides. They seem remarkably like us. Yet to them was entrusted the Gospel, and to them were written the marvelous letters of Paul and the rest. If they were 'called to be saints,' can't we be saints, too?" (P. 71.)

TH. LAETSCH

On Paths of Destiny (127 pages) and **On Sandals of Peace** (133 pages). Published by Concordia Publishing House. Price, each, 25 cents.

These are the first two books (the Rev. G. Mahler, author) prepared under the auspices of Synod and supported by the International Walther

League for the purpose of aiding pastors and congregations in establishing an intelligent mission study program in their circles. *On Sandals of Peace* covers the missionary theme as presented in the Old and New Testaments of Holy Scripture. *On Paths of Destiny* undertakes a sketch of the heathen world and shows the need of missionary work. In both volumes the method of presenting the material is unique. While it is true that the books are written chiefly for the young people of the Church, the style is so vivid and gripping that the members of the upper school grades will not find them too difficult, and adults will discover that they are not too juvenile for their own reading and study. The author has sufficiently demonstrated in these volumes that the study of missions need not be a dry and tedious process, but can be done with keen enjoyment. We earnestly recommend these books to our pastors and hope that throughout our Church they may help to establish and build up a zeal for, and interest in, missions among old and young, so that we as a group may be ready and willing to do our part in the expansion of the Church after the present war comes to its God-ordained end.

W. G. POLACK

Romance of Woman Hymn-Writers. By F. W. Pitt. Published by Fundamental Truth Publishers, Findlay, Ohio. 96 pages. \$1.00.

Mr. Pitt is one of the chief leaders in the Advent Testimony and Preparation Movement in England and was for some years editor of its official organ, *The Advent Witness*. In his introduction the author makes the statement: "The Latin fathers wrote some grand hymns, while the Latin mothers remained silent, nor can I find the record of any woman writer of hymns for nearly eighteen hundred years after the Church was formed, nor indeed since the world began." We cannot imagine that the author never heard of the Virgin Mary's *Magnificat*, for, of course, he did, but in his effort to prove that when women finally began to write hymns they outstripped men, he maintains that the *Magnificat* was not written for others to sing. Is that not true of many hymns and yet they were later sung the world over? And, as is so often the case with English writers, he evidently did not carefully scrutinize the hymn writers of the European continent. In the seventeenth century we have Ludämilie Elizabeth, Countess of Schwarzburg, author of the fine hymn "Jesus, Jesus, Only Jesus," and her cousin Ämilie Juliane, Countess of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt, author of the well-known hymns "The Lord hath Helped Me Hitherto" and "Who Knows When Death may Over-take Me?" Also, in the same century there was Anna Sophia of Hesse-Darmstadt, among whose hymns is "Speak, O Lord, Thy Servant Heareth," which is still popular today. In the sixteenth century we have Elizabeth Creutziger, whose Christmas hymn "Herr Christ, der einig' Gott's Sohn" was first published in *Eyn Enchiridion*, Erfurt, 1524. In French hymnody we have in the seventeenth century the *Cantiques Spirituels* of Mme. Guyon, which Mr. Pitt might have become acquainted with in English since Wm. Cowper translated them quite some time ago. Mr. Pitt can therefore hardly expect us to agree with his next statement: "The silence of women singers was at last broken by Miss Annie Steele."

Mr. Pitt's list of women hymn writers includes such well-known

names as Harriet Auber, Charlotte Elliott, Elizabeth Clephane, Fanny Crosby, Frances Ridley Havergal, and such lesser known names as Caroline Noel, Charitie Lees Smith, and Anne Ross Cousin. Just why he omitted the famous women translators Catherine Winkworth, Jane Borthwick, Frances Elizabeth Cox, and original poets like Margaret Mackay, Mary Fowler Maude, and Mary C. Gates, is not clear.

W. G. POLACK

Youth Faces Today's Crisis. By Dan Gilbert. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 112 pages, 5¼×8. Price, \$1.00.

There is no dearth of books on the subjects of youth and adolescence, but the number of such books as treat the topic from the conservative Christian angle is very small. For that reason we welcome this new book by a man who has presented the thinking public with other monographs which well repay careful study. The background of the author's thinking is apparent throughout the book. It is the belief in the atoning power of the Cross. The fundamental thought of the book may well be summarized in the words of the author on page 28: "The Christian youth is not primarily concerned with this life and this world. His eyes are on eternity—he is looking forward to living *with* Jesus forever; he is not concerned with living *for* Jesus. The Christian youth does *want* character; he does *need* character—for the present and for the future." The author, in seven chapters, discusses the need of character, of conviction, of courage, of a clean conscience, of compassion, of self-control, and of chastity. There are passages of beauty and of power throughout, such as (p. 98): "Christ never asked any follower of His to take a step, to make a move, to think a thought, to draw a breath, *without Him*. Whatever we are to do for Him we must do with Him and through Him." We recommend the book most heartily, also for topic discussions in the young people's meetings of our congregations.

P. E. KRETZMANN

The Pastor's Legal Adviser. By Norton F. Brand and Verner M. Ingram. Published by Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York. 237 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$2.00.

Here is a book we have long looked for, "a simple authoritative Manual of Law for the busy minister and for the layman who is concerned with church problems and properties," as the jacket informs us. Of the two authors, "Mr. Norton F. Brand is a retired United States consul and a former practicing attorney. He has served on diplomatic staffs in Canada and Mexico. He is author of *Washington Justice Code* and *The Mexican Southland*. Mr. Verner M. Ingram, the co-author, is a member of the Potsdam, New York, Bar." The list of cases on pages 225–232, comprising some 700–800, speaks for the volume of research done in preparing the book. While, of course, it is not intended as a substitute for expert legal assistance when a lawyer's services are needed, this does not detract from the value of the book. It admirably serves its purpose of giving "ministers a general understanding and basic knowledge of the law." (P. 5.) The four parts set forth 295 essentials of law important to the minister, his church, and his people. The first part deals with Basic Religious Rights; Part Two, with Church Organization; Part Three,

with Church Property; Part Four, with Special Pastoral Activities, the latter including Marriage, pp. 161—184; Copyright, pp. 185—193; and Wills, pp. 194—214. A five-page double-column index increases the value of the book. No pastor will regret spending \$2 for this book.

TH. LAETSCH

Curriculum in Christian Citizenship for Lutheran Schools. By Herbert Gross. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 18 pages, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$. Price, 25 cents.

This pamphlet is a worthy successor to the other monographs issued by the Curriculum Committee, which have definitely proved their worth in our Lutheran parish schools. The author's mastery of his subject is apparent on every page, and the best recommendation of the pamphlet is the fact that it teaches *Christian* citizenship. The suggestions will not only serve our Lutheran teachers and school-teaching pastors, but will prove of great value in any course of topics or any individual talk on Christian ethics. The book deserves to be widely disseminated and carefully studied.

P. E. KRETZMANN

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.:

In Quest of the Best. By Porter M. Bailes. 131 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. Price: \$1.00.

Practical Proverbs for Everyday Christian Living. By C. Gordon Brownville. 113 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. Price, \$1.00.

This Critical Hour. And Other Heart-Searching Sermons. By Robert G. Lee. 146 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. Price, \$1.00.

Why Believe? Sermons to Establish Faith. By Wil R. Johnson, D. D. 141 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. Price, \$1.00.

Life's Supreme Decision as Revealed in the Strangest Book in the World. By C. E. Matthews. 127 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. Price, \$1.00.

From Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, London, and Edinburgh:

The Romance of Evangelism. By Roland Q. Leavell. 95 pages, $5 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. Price, \$1.00.

Intermediates' Worship Programs. Compiled and Edited by Mary Elizabeth Past. 205 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8$. Price, \$2.00.

From Harper and Brothers, New York and London:

Meditations for Days and Seasons. By M. K. W. Heicher. 271 pages, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$. Price, \$2.50.

From Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.:

The Trebalto Collection. Two-part and Three-part Choir Numbers. No. 114: Service Selections. By J. C. Wohlfeil. 16 pages, 7×10 . Price, 60 cents.

